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THE WOODLANDERS.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

CHAPTER XXX.

EXAMINE Grace as her father might, she would admit nothing. For the present, therefore, he simply watched.

The suspicion that his darling child was being slighted wrought almost a miraculous change in Melbury's nature. No man so furtive for the time as the ingenuous countryman who finds that his ingenuousness has been abused. Melbury's heretofore confidential candour towards his gentlemanly son-in-law was displaced by a feline stealth that did injury to his every action, thought, and mood. He knew that a woman once given to a man for life took, as a rule, her lot as it came, and made the best of it, without external interference; but for the first time he asked himself why this so generally should be done. Moreover this case was not, he argued, like ordinary cases. Leaving out the question of Grace being anything but an ordinary woman, her peculiar situation, as it were in mid-air between two planes of society, together with the loneliness of Hintock, made a husband's neglect a far more tragical matter to her than it would be to one who had a large circle of friends to fall back upon. Wisely or unwisely, and whatever other fathers did, he resolved to fight his daughter's battle still.

Mrs. Charmond had returned. But

Hintock House scarcely gave forth signs of life, so quietly had she re-entered it. Autumn drew shiveringly to its end. One day something seemed to be gone from the gardens; the tenderer leaves of vegetables had shrunk under the first smart frost, and hung like faded linen rags; then the forest leaves, which had been descending at leisure, descended in haste and in multitudes, and all the golden colours that had hung overhead were now crowded together in a degraded mass underfoot, where the fallen myriads got redder and hornier, and curled themselves up to rot. The only suspicious features in Mrs. Charmond's existence at this season were two: the first, that she lived with no companion or relative about her, which, considering her age and attractions, was somewhat unusual conduct for a young widow in a lonely country house; the other, that she did not, as in previous years, start from Hintock to winter abroad. In Fitzpiers, the only change from his last autumn's habits lay in his abandonment of night study; his lamp never shone from his new dwelling as from his old.

If the suspected ones met it was by such adroit contrivances that even Melbury's vigilance could not encounter them together. A simple call at her house by the doctor had nothing irregular about it, and that he had paid two or three such calls was

certain. What had passed at those interviews was known only to the parties themselves; but that Felice Charmond was under some one's influence Melbury soon had opportunity of perceiving.

Winter had come on. Owls began to be noisy in the mornings and evenings, and flocks of wood-pigeons made themselves prominent again. One day in February, about six months after the marriage of Fitzpiers, Melbury was returning from Great Hintock on foot through the lane, when he saw before him the surgeon also walking. Melbury would have overtaken him, but at that moment Fitzpiers turned in through a gate to one of the rambling drives among the trees at this side of the wood, which led to nowhere in particular, and the beauty of whose serpentine curves were the only justification of their existence. Felice almost simultaneously trotted down the lane towards the timber-dealer, in a little basket-carriage which she sometimes drove about the estate, unaccompanied by a servant. She turned in at the same place without having seen either Melbury or, apparently, Fitzpiers. Melbury was soon at the spot, despite his aches and his sixty years. Mrs. Charmond had come up with the doctor, who was standing immediately behind the carriage. She had turned to him, her arm being thrown carelessly over the back of the seat. They looked in each other's faces without uttering a word, an arch yet gloomy smile wreathing her lips. Fitzpiers clasped her hanging hand, and, while she still remained in the same listless attitude, looking volumes into his eyes, he stealthily unbuttoned her glove, and stripped her hand of it by rolling back the gauntlet over the fingers, so that it came off inside out. He then raised her hand to his mouth, she still reclining passively, watching him as she might have watched a fly upon her dress. At last she said, "Well, sir, what excuse for this disobedience?"

"I make none."

"Then go your way, and let me go mine." She snatched away her hand, touched the pony with the whip, and left him standing there, holding the reversed glove.

Melbury's first impulse was to reveal his presence to Fitzpiers, and upbraid him bitterly. But a moment's thought was sufficient to show him the futility of any such simple proceeding. There was not, after all, so much in what he had witnessed as in what that scene might be the surface and froth of—probably a state of mind which censure aggravates rather than cures. Moreover, he said to himself that the point of attack should be the woman, if either. He therefore kept out of sight, and musing sadly, even tearfully—for he was meek as a child in matters concerning his daughter—continued his way towards Hintock.

The insight which is bred of deep sympathy was never more finely exemplified than in this instance. Through her guarded manner, her dignified speech, her placid countenance, he discerned the interior of Grace's life only too truly, hidden as were its incidents from every outer eye.

These incidents had become painful enough. Fitzpiers had latterly developed an irritable discontent which vented itself in monologues when Grace was present to hear them. The early morning of this day had been dull, after a night of wind, and on looking out of the window Fitzpiers had observed some of Melbury's men dragging away a large limb which had been snapped off a beech tree. Everything was cold and colourless.

"My good heaven!" he said as he stood in his dressing-gown. "This is life!" He did not know whether Grace was awake or not, and he would not turn his head to ascertain. "Ah, fool," he went on to himself, "to clip your own wings when you were free to soar! . . . But I could not rest till I had done it. Why do I never recognise an opportunity till I have

missed it, nor the good or ill of a step till it is irrevocable! . . . I fell in love. . . . Love, indeed!—

“Love’s but the frailty of the mind
When ’tis not with ambition joined;
A sickly flame which, if not fed, expires,
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires!”

Grace moved. He thought she had heard some part of his soliloquy. He was sorry—though he had not taken any precaution to prevent her.

He expected a scene at breakfast, but she only exhibited an extreme reserve. It was enough, however, to make him repent that he should have done anything to produce discomfort; for he attributed her manner entirely to what he had said. But Grace’s manner had not its cause either in his sayings or in his doings. She had not heard a single word of his regrets. Something even nearer home than her husband’s blighted prospects—if blighted they were—was the origin of her mood, a mood that was the mere continuation of what her father had noticed when he would have preferred a passionate jealousy in her as the more natural.

She had made a discovery—one which to a girl of honest nature was almost appalling. She had looked into her heart, and found that her early interest in Giles Winterborne had become revitalised into luxuriant growth by her widening perceptions of what was great and little in life. His homeliness no longer offended her acquired tastes; his comparative want of so-called culture did not now jar on her intellect; his country dress even pleased her eye; his exterior roughness fascinated her. Having discovered by marriage how much that was humanly not great could co-exist with attainments of an exceptional order, there was a revulsion in her sentiments from all that she had formerly clung to in this kind. Honesty, goodness, manliness, tenderness, devotion, for her only existed in their purity now in the breasts of unvarnished men; and here was one

who had manifested such towards her from his youth up.

There was, further, that never-ceasing pity in her soul for Giles as a man whom she had wronged—a man who had been unfortunate in his worldly transactions; while, not without a touch of sublimity, he had, like Hamlet’s friend, borne himself throughout his scathing

“As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing.”

It was these perceptions, and no subtle catching of her husband’s murmurs, that had bred the abstraction visible in her.

When her father approached the house after witnessing the interview between Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond, Grace was looking out of her sitting-room window, as if she had nothing to do, or think of, or care for. He stood still.

“Ah, Grace,” he said, regarding her fixedly.

“Yes, father,” she murmured.

“Waiting for your dear husband?” he inquired, speaking with the sarcasm of pitiful affection.

“Oh no—not especially. He has a great many patients to see this afternoon.”

Melbury came quite close. “Grace, what’s the use of talking like that, when you know—. Here, come down and walk with me out in the garden, child.”

He unfastened the door in the ivy-laced wall, and waited. This apparent indifference alarmed him. He would far rather that she had rushed in all the fire of jealousy to Hintock House, regardless of conventionality, confronted Felice Charmond, and accused her even in exaggerated shape of stealing away her husband. Such a storm might have cleared the air.

She emerged in a minute or two, and they went into the garden together. “You know as well as I do,” he resumed, “that there is something threatening mischief to your life; and yet you pretend you do not. Do you suppose I don’t see the trouble in your face

every day? I am very sure that this quietude is wrong conduct in you. You should look more into matters."

"I am quiet because my sadness is not of a nature to stir me to action."

Melbury wanted to ask her a dozen questions—did she not feel jealous? was she not indignant? but a natural delicacy restrained him. "You are very tame and let-alone, I am bound to say," he remarked pointedly.

"I am what I feel, father," she repeated.

He glanced at her, and there returned upon his mind the scene of her offering to wed Winterborne instead of Fitzpiers in the last days before her marriage; and he asked himself if it could be the fact that she loved Winterborne now that she had lost him more than she had ever done when she was comparatively free to choose him.

"What would you have me do?" she asked in a low voice.

He recalled his mind from the retrospective pain to the practical matter before them. "I would have you go to Mrs. Charmond," he said.

"Go to Mrs. Charmond—what for?" said she.

"Well—if I must speak plain, dear Grace—to ask her, appeal to her in the name of your common womanhood, and your many like sentiments on things, not to make unhappiness between you and your husband. It lies with her entirely to do one or the other—that I can see."

Grace's face had heated at her father's words, and the very rustle of her skirts upon the box-edging bespoke disdain. "I shall not think of going to her, father—of course, I could not!" she answered.

"Why—don't 'ee want to be happier than you be at present?" said Melbury, more moved on her account than she was herself.

"I don't wish to be more humiliated. If I have anything to bear I can bear it in silence."

"But my dear maid you are too young—you don't know what the pre-

sent state of things may lead to. Just see the harm done already! Your husband would have gone away to Budmouth to a bigger practice if it had not been for this. Although it has gone such a little way it is poisoning your future even now. Mrs. Charmond is thoughtlessly bad, not bad by calculation; and just a word to her now might save 'ee a peck of woes."

"Ah, I loved her once," said Grace with a broken articulation, "and she would not care for me then! Now I no longer love her. Let her do her worst: I don't care."

"You ought to care. You have got into a very good position to start with. You have been well educated, well tended, and you have become the wife of a professional man of unusually good family. Surely you ought to make the best of your position."

"I don't see that I ought. I wish I had never got into it. I wish you had never, never thought of educating me. I wish I worked in the woods like Marty South. I hate genteel life, and I want to be no better than she."

"Why?" said her amazed father.

"Because cultivation has only brought me inconveniences and troubles. I say again, I wish you had never sent me to those fashionable schools you set your mind on. It all arose out of that, father. If I had stayed at home I should have married——" She closed up her mouth suddenly and was silent; and he saw that she was not far from crying.

Melbury was much grieved. "What, and would you like to have grown up as we be here in Hintock—knowing no more, and with no more chance of seeing good life than we have here?"

"Yes. I have never got any happiness outside Hintock that I know of, and I have suffered many a heart-ache at being sent away. Oh the misery of those January days when I had got back to school, and left you all here in the wood so happy! I used to wonder why I had to bear it. And I was always a little despised by the

other girls at school, because they knew where I came from, and that my parents were not in so good a station as theirs."

Her poor father was much hurt at what he thought her ingratitude and intractability. He had admitted to himself bitterly enough that he should have let young hearts have their way, or rather should have helped on her affection for Winterborne, and given her to him according to his original plan; but he was not prepared for her deprecation of those attainments whose completion had been a labour of years, and a severe tax upon his purse.

"Very well," he said with much heaviness of spirit. "If you don't like to go to her I don't wish to force you."

And so the question remained for him still: how should he remedy this perilous state of things. For days he sat in a moody attitude over the fire, a pitcher of cider standing on the hearth beside him, and his drinking-horn inverted upon the top of it. He spent a week and more thus, composing a letter to the chief offender, which he would every now and then attempt to complete, and suddenly crumple up in his hand.

CHAPTER XXXI.

As February merged in March, and lighter evenings broke the gloom of the woodmen's homeward journey, the Hintocks Great and Little began to have ears for a rumour of the events out of which had grown the timber-dealer's troubles. It took the form of a wide sprinkling of conjecture, wherein no man knew the exact truth. Tantalising phenomena, at once showing and concealing the real relationship of the persons concerned, caused a diffusion of excited surprise. Honest people as the woodlanders were, it was hardly to be expected that they could remain immersed in the study of their trees and gardens amid such circumstances, or sit with

their backs turned like the good burghers of Coventry at the passage of the beautiful lady.

Rumour, for a wonder, exaggerated little. There threatened, in fact, in Grace's case as in thousands, the domestic disaster, old as the hills, which, with more or less variation, made a mourner of Ariadne, a by-word of Vashti, and a corpse of Amy Dudley. The incidents were rencounters accidental and contrived, stealthy correspondence, sudden misgivings on one side, sudden self-reproaches on the other. The inner state of the twain was one as of confused noise that would not allow the accents of politic reason to be heard. Determination to go in this direction, and headlong plunges in that; dignified safeguards, undignified collapses; not a single rash step by deliberate intention, and all against judgment.

It was all that Melbury had expected and feared. It was more, for he had overlooked the publicity that would be likely to result, as it now had done. What should he do? Appeal to Mrs. Charmond himself, since Grace would not? He bethought himself of Winterborne, and resolved to consult him, feeling the strong need of some friend of his own sex to whom he might unburden his mind.

He had entirely lost faith in his own judgment. That judgment on which he had relied for so many years seemed recently, like a false companion unmasked, to have disclosed unexpected depths of hypocrisy and speciousness where all had seemed solidity. He felt almost afraid to form a conjecture on the weather, or the time, or the fruit-promise, so great was his self-mistrust.

It was a rimy evening when he set out to look for Giles. The woods seemed to be in a cold sweat; beads of perspiration hung from every bare twig; the sky had no colour, and the trees rose before him as haggard, grey phantoms, whose days of substantiality were passed. Melbury seldom saw Winterborne now, but he believed him

to be occupying a lonely hut just beyond the boundary of Mrs. Charmond's estate, though still within the circuit of the woodland. The timber merchant's thin legs stalked on through the pale damp scenery, his eyes on the dead leaves of last year; while every now and then a hasty "ay!" escaped his lips in reply to some bitter mental proposition.

His notice was attracted by a thin blue haze of smoke, behind which arose sounds of voices and chopping: bending his steps that way he saw Winterborne just in front of him. It just now happened that Giles, after being for a long time apathetic and unemployed, had become one of the busiest men in the neighbourhood. It is often thus; fallen friends, lost sight of, we expect to find starving; we discover them going on fairly well. Without any solicitation, or desire for profit on his part, he had been asked to execute during that winter a very large order for hurdles and other copseware, for which purpose he had been obliged to buy several acres of brushwood standing. He was now engaged in the cutting and manufacture of the same, proceeding with the work daily like an automaton.

The hazel-tree did not belie its name to-day. The whole of the copse-wood where the mist had cleared returned purest tints of that hue, amid which Winterborne himself was in the act of making a hurdle, the stakes being driven firmly into the ground in a row, over which he bent and wove the twigs. Beside him was a square, compact pile like the altar of Cain, formed of hurdles already finished, which bristled on all sides with the sharp points of their stakes. At a little distance the men in his employ were assisting him to carry out his contract. Rows of copse-wood lay on the ground as it had fallen under the axe; and a shelter had been constructed near at hand, in front of which burnt the fire whose smoke had attracted Melbury. The air was so dank that the smoke hung heavily,

and crept away amid the bushes without rising from the ground.

After wistfully regarding the scene a while Melbury drew nearer, and briefly inquired of Giles how he came to be so busily engaged, with an undertone of slight surprise that Winterborne could recommence thriving, even to this degree, after being deprived of Grace. Melbury was not without emotion at the meeting, for Grace's affairs had divided them, and ended their intimacy of old times.

Winterborne explained just as briefly, without raising his eyes from his occupation of chopping a bough that he held in front of him.

"Twill be up in April before you get it all cleared," said Melbury.

"Yes, there or thereabouts," said Winterborne, a chop of the bill-hook jerking the last word into two pieces.

There was another interval; Melbury still looked on, a chip from Winterborne's hook occasionally flying against the waistcoat and legs of his visitor, who took no heed.

"Ah, Giles—you should have been my partner. You should have been my son-in-law," the old man said at last. "It would have been far better for her and for me!"

Winterborne saw that something had gone wrong with his former friend, and, throwing down the switch he was about to interweave, he responded only too readily to the mood of the timber-dealer. "Is she ill?" he said hurriedly.

"No, no." Melbury stood without speaking for some minutes, and then, as though he could not bring himself to proceed, turned to go away.

Winterborne told one of his men to pack up the tools for the night, and walked after Melbury.

"Heaven forbid that I should seem too inquisitive, sir," he said, "especially since we don't stand as we used to stand to one another; but I hope it is well with them all over your way!"

"No," said Melbury, "no." He stopped, and struck the smooth trunk of a young ash-tree with the flat of his

hand. "I would that his ear had been where that rind is!" he exclaimed; "I should have treated him to little compared wi' what he deserves."

"Now," said Winterborne, "don't be in a hurry to go home. I've put some mead down to warm in my shelter here, and we'll sit and drink it and talk this over."

Melbury turned unresistingly as Giles took his arm, and they went back to where the fire was, and sat down under the screen, the other woodmen having gone. He drew out the mead-cup from the ashes, and they drank together.

"Giles, you ought to have had her, as I said just now," repeated Melbury. "I'll tell you why for the first time."

He thereupon told Winterborne, as with great relief, the story of how he won away Giles's father's chosen one—by nothing worse than a lover's cajoleries, it is true; but by means which, except in love, would certainly have been pronounced cruel and unfair. He explained how he had always intended to make reparation to Winterborne the father by giving Grace to Winterborne the son; till the devil tempted him in the person of Fitzpiers and he broke his virtuous vow.

"How highly I thought of that man, to be sure! Who'd have supposed he'd have been so weak and wrong-headed as this! You ought to have had her, Giles, and there's an end on't."

Winterborne knew how to preserve his calm under this unconsciously cruel tearing of a healing wound, to which Melbury's concentration on the more vital subject had blinded him. The young man endeavoured to make the best of the case, for Grace's sake.

"She would hardly have been happy with me," he said, in the dry, unimpassioned voice under which he hid his feelings. "I was not well enough educated: too rough in short. I couldn't have surrounded her with the refinements she looked for, anyhow at all."

"Nonsense—you are quite wrong there," said the unwise old man doggedly. "She told me only this day that she hates refinements and such like. All that my trouble and money bought for her in that way is thrown away upon her quite. She'd fain be like Marty South—think o' that! That's the top of her ambition! Perhaps she's right. Giles, she loved you—under the rind; and what's more she loves ye still—worse luck for the poor maid!"

If Melbury only had known what fires he was recklessly stirring up he might have held his peace. Winterborne was silent a long time. The darkness had closed in round them, and the monotonous drip of the fog from the branches quickened as it turned to fine rain.

"Oh, she never cared much for me," Giles managed to say as he stirred the embers with a brand.

"She did, and does, I tell ye," said the other obstinately. "However, all that's vain talking now. What I come to ask you about is a more practical matter—how to make the best of things as they are. I am thinking of a desperate step—of calling on the woman Charmond. I am going to appeal to her, since Grace will not. 'Tis she who holds the balance in her hands—not he. While she's got the will to lead him astray he will follow—poor unpractical lofty-notioned dreamer—and how long she'll do it depends upon her whim. Did ye ever hear anything about her character before she came to Hintock?"

"She's been a bit of a charmer in her time, I believe," replied Giles, with the same level quietude, as he regarded the red coals. "One who has smiled where she has not loved, and loved where she has not married. Before Mr. Charmond made her his wife she was a play-actress."

"Hey? But how close you have kept all this, Giles! What besides?"

"Mr. Charmond was a rich man engaged in the iron trade in the north—twenty or thirty years older than she.

He married her, and retired, and came down here and bought this property."

"Yes, yes—I know all about that. But the other I did not know. I fear it bodes no good. For how can I go and appeal to the forbearance of a woman in this matter who has made cross-loves and crooked entanglements her trade for years? I thank ye, Giles, for finding it out; but it makes my plan the harder that she should have belonged to that unstable tribe!"

Another pause ensued, and they looked gloomily at the smoke that beat about the roof of hurdles through whose weavings a large drop of rain fell at intervals and spat smartly into the fire. Mrs. Charmond had been no friend to Winterborne, but he was manly, and it was not in his heart to let her be condemned without a trial.

"She is said to be generous," he answered. "You might not appeal to her in vain."

"It shall be done," said Melbury, rising. "For good, or for evil, to Mrs. Charmond I'll go."

CHAPTER XXXII.

At nine o'clock the next morning Melbury dressed himself up in shining broadcloth, creased with folding and smelling of camphor, and started for Hintock House. He was the more impelled to go at once by the absence of his son-in-law in London for a few days, to attend, really or ostensibly, some professional meetings. He said nothing of his destination either to his wife or to Grace, fearing that they might entreat him to abandon so risky a project; and went out unobserved. He had chosen his time with a view, as he supposed, of conveniently catching Mrs. Charmond when she had just finished her breakfast, before any other business people should be about, if any came. Plodding thoughtfully onward he crossed a glade lying between Little Hintock Woods and the plantation which abutted on the park. The spot being open he was discerned there by Winterborne from the copse on the

next hill, where he and his men were working. Knowing his mission the younger man hastened down from the copse and managed to intercept the timber-merchant.

"I have been thinking of this, sir," he said, "and I am of opinion that it would be best to put off your visit for the present."

But Melbury would not even stop to hear him. His mind was fixed, the appeal was to be made; and Winterborne stood and watched him sadly till he entered the second plantation and disappeared.

Melbury rang at the tradesmen's door of the manor-house, and was at once informed that the lady was not yet visible, as indeed he might have guessed had he been anybody but the man he was. Melbury said he would wait, whereupon the young page informed him in a neighbourly way that, between themselves, she was in bed and asleep.

"Never mind," said Melbury, retreating into the court, "I'll stand about here." Charged so fully with his mission he shrank from contact with anybody.

But he walked about the paved court till he was tired, and still nobody came to him. At last he entered the house, and sat down in a small waiting-room, from which he got glimpses of the kitchen-corridor, and of the white-capped maids flitting jauntily hither and thither. They had heard of his arrival, but had not seen him enter, and, imagining him still in the court, discussed freely the possible reason of his calling. They marvelled at his temerity; for though most of the tongues which had been let loose attributed the chief blame to Fitzpiers, these of her household preferred to regard their mistress as the deeper sinner.

Melbury sat with his hands resting on the familiar knobbed thorn walking-stick whose growing he had seen before he enjoyed its use. The scene to him was not the material environment of his person, but a tragic vision that

travelled with him like an envelope. Through this vision the incidents of the moment but gleamed confusedly here and there, as an outer landscape through the high-coloured scenes of a stained window. He waited thus an hour, an hour and a half, two hours. He began to look pale and ill, whereupon the butler, who came in, asked him to have a glass of wine. Melbury roused himself, and said "No, no. Is she almost ready?"

"She is just finishing breakfast," said the butler. "She will soon see you now. I am just going up to tell her you are here."

"What, haven't you told her before?" said Melbury.

"Oh, no," said the other. "You see you came so very early."

At last the bell rang: Mrs. Charmond could see him. She was not in her private sitting-room when he reached it, but in a minute he heard her coming from the front staircase, and she entered where he stood.

At this time of the morning Mrs. Charmond looked her full age and more. She might almost have been taken for the typical *femme de trente ans*, though she was really not more than seven or eight and twenty. There being no fire in the room she came in with a shawl thrown loosely round her shoulders, and obviously without the least suspicion that Melbury had called upon any other errand than timber. Felice was, indeed, the only woman in the parish who had not heard the rumour of her own weaknesses; she was at this moment living in a fool's paradise in respect of that rumour, though not in respect of the weaknesses themselves, which, if the truth be told, caused her grave misgivings.

"Do sit down, Mr. Melbury. You have felled all the trees that were to be purchased by you this season, except the oaks, I believe?"

"Yes, yes," said Melbury in a reverie. He did not take a chair, and she also remained standing. Resting upon his stick he began: "Mrs.

Charmond, I have called upon a more serious matter—at least to me—than tree-throwing. And whatever mistakes I make in my manner of speaking upon it to you, madam, do me the justice to set 'em down to my want of practice, and not to my want of care."

Mrs. Charmond looked ill at ease. She might have begun to guess his meaning; but apart from that she had such dread of contact with anything painful, harsh, or even earnest, that his preliminaries alone were enough to distress her. "Yes, what is it?" she said quickly.

"I am an old man," said Melbury, "whom, somewhat late in life, God thought fit to bless with one child, and she a daughter. Her mother was a very dear wife to me; but she was taken away from us when the child was young; and the child became precious as the apple of my eye to me, for she was all I had left to love. For her sake entirely I married as second wife a homespun woman who had been kind as a mother to her. In due time the question of her education came on; and I said, 'I will educate the maid well, if I live upon bread to do it.' Of her possible marriage I could not bear to think, for it seemed like a death that she should cleave to another man, and grow to think his house her home rather than mine. But I saw it was the law of nature that this should be; and that it was for the maid's happiness that she should have a home when I was gone: and I made up my mind without a murmur to help it on for her sake. In my youth I had wronged my dead friend, and to make amends I determined to give her, my most precious possession, to my friend's son, seeing that they liked each other well. Things came about which made me doubt if it would be for my daughter's happiness to do this, inasmuch as the young man was poor, and she was delicately reared. Another man came and paid court to her—one her equal in breeding and accomplishments; in every way it seemed to me that he only could give her the home

which her training had made a necessity almost. I urged her on, and she married him. But, ma'am, a fatal mistake was at the root of my reckoning: I found that this well-born gentleman I had calculated on so surely was not staunch of heart, and that therein lay a danger of great sorrow for my daughter. Madam, he saw you, and you know the rest. . . I have come to make no demands—to utter no threats; I have come simply as a father in great grief about his only child, and I beseech you to deal kindly with my daughter and to do nothing which can turn her husband's heart away from her for ever! Forbid him your presence, ma'am, and speak to him on his duty, as one with your power over him well can do: and I am hopeful that the rent between them may be patched up. For it is not as if you would lose by so doing; your course is far higher than the courses of a simple professional man; and the gratitude you would win from me and mine by your kindness is more than I can say."

Mrs. Charmond had first rushed into a mood of indignation, on comprehending Melbury's story: hot and cold by turns she had murmured, "Leave me, leave me!" But, as he seemed to take no notice of this, his words began to influence her, and when he ceased speaking she said with hurried breath, "What has led you to think this of me? Who says I have won your daughter's husband away from her? Some monstrous calumnies are afloat—of which I have known nothing until now!"

Melbury started, and looked at her simply: "But surely, ma'am, you know the truth better than I?"

Her features became a little pinched, and the touches of powder on her handsome face for the first time showed themselves as an extrinsic film. "Will you leave me to myself?" she said with a faintness which suggested a guilty conscience. "This is so utterly unexpected—you obtain admission to my presence by misrepresentation—"

"As God's in heaven, ma'am, that's not true. I made no pretence; and I thought in reason you would know why I had come. This gossip—"

"I have heard nothing of it. Tell me the gist of it, pray!"

"Tell you, ma'am—not I. What the gossip is, no matter. What really is, you know. Set facts right, and the scandal will right of itself. But pardon me—I speak roughly; and I came to speak gently, to coax you, beg you to be my daughter's friend. She loved you once, ma'am; you began by liking her. Then you dropped her without a reason, and it hurt her warm heart more than I can tell ye. But you were within your right as the superior, no doubt. But if you would consider her position now—surely, surely, you would do her no harm!"

"Certainly I would do her no harm—I—" Melbury's eye met hers. It was curious, but the allusion to Grace's former love for her seemed to touch her more than all Melbury's other arguments. "Oh, Melbury," she burst out, "you have made me so unhappy! How could you come to me like this! It is too dreadful! Now go away—go, go!"

"I will," he said, in a husky tone.

As soon as he was out of the room she went to a corner and there sat and writhed, under an emotion in which hurt pride and vexation mingled with better sentiments.

Mrs. Charmond's mobile spirit was subject to these fierce periods of high-tide and storm. She had never so clearly perceived till now that her soul was being slowly invaded by a delirium which had brought about all this; that she was losing judgment and dignity under it, becoming an animated impulse only, a passion incarnate. A fascination had led her on: it was as if she had been seized by a hand of velvet; and this was where she found herself—overshadowed with sudden night, as if a tornado had passed.

While she sat, or rather crouched, unbinged by the interview, lunch-time

came, and then the early afternoon, almost without her consciousness. Then "a strange gentleman who says it is not necessary to give his name," was suddenly announced.

"I cannot see him, whoever he may be. I am not at home to anybody."

She heard no more of her visitor; and shortly after, in an attempt to recover some mental serenity by violent physical exercise, she put on her hat and cloak and went out of doors, taking a path which led her up the slopes to the nearest spur of the wood. She disliked the woods, but they had the advantage of being a place in which she could walk comparatively unobserved.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE was agitation that day in the lives of all whom these matters concerned. It was not till the Hintock dinner-time—one o'clock—that Grace discovered her father's absence from the house after a departure in the morning under somewhat unusual conditions. By a little reasoning and inquiry she was able to divine his errand.

Her husband was absent, and her father did not return. He had, in truth, gone on to Sherton after the interview, but this Grace did not know. In an indefinite dread that something serious would arise out of Melbury's visit by reason of the inequalities of temper and nervous irritation to which he was subject, something possibly that would bring her much more misery than accompanied her present negative state of mind, she left the house about three o'clock, and took a loitering walk in the woodland track by which she imagined he would come home. This track under the bare trees and over the cracking sticks, screened and roofed in from the outer world of wind and cloud by a network of boughs, led her slowly on till in time she had left the larger trees behind her and swept round into the coppice

where Winterborne and his men were clearing the undergrowth.

Had Giles's attention been concentrated on his hurdles he would not have seen her; but ever since Melbury's passage across the opposite glade in the morning he had been as uneasy and unsettled as Grace herself; and her advent now was the one appearance which, since her father's avowal, could arrest him more than Melbury's return with his tidings. Fearing that something might be the matter he hastened up to her.

She had not seen her old lover for a long time, and too conscious of the late pranks of her heart she could not behold him calmly. "I am only looking for my father," she said in an unnecessary tone of apology.

"I was looking for him too," said Giles. "I think he may perhaps have gone on further."

"Then you knew he was going to the House, Giles?" she said, turning her large tender eyes anxiously upon him. "Did he tell you what for?"

Winterborne glanced doubtingly at her, and then softly hinted that her father had visited him the evening before, and that their old friendship was quite restored; on which she guessed the rest.

"Oh, I am glad indeed that you two are friends again!" she cried. And then they stood facing each other, fearing each other, troubling each other's souls. Grace experienced acute regret at the sight of these wood-cutting scenes, because she had estranged herself from them; craving, even to its defects and inconveniences, that homely sylvan life of her father which in the best probable succession of events would shortly be denied her.

At a little distance, on the edge of the clearing, Marty South was shaping spar-gads to take home for manufacture during the evenings. While Winterborne and Mrs. Fitzpiers stood looking at her in their mutual embarrassment at each other's presence, they beheld, approaching the girl, a lady

in a dark fur mantle and black hat, having a white veil tied picturesquely round it. She spoke to Marty, who turned and curtsied, and the lady fell into conversation with her. It was Mrs. Charmond.

On leaving her house, Mrs. Charmond had walked on under the fret and fever of her mind with more vigour than she was accustomed to show in her normal moods—a fever which the solace of a cigarette did not entirely allay. Reaching the coppice, she listlessly observed Marty at work, threw away her cigarette, and went near. Chop, chop, chop, went Marty's little bill-hook with never more assiduity, till Mrs. Charmond spoke.

"Who is that young lady I see talking to the woodman yonder?" she asked.

"Mrs. Fitzpiers, ma'am," said Marty.

"Oh," said Mrs. Charmond, with something like a start; for she had not recognised Grace at that distance. "And the man she is talking to?"

"That's Mr. Winterborne."

A redness stole into Marty's face as she mentioned Giles's name, which Mrs. Charmond did not fail to notice: it informed her of the state of the girl's heart. "Are you engaged to him?" she asked softly.

"No, ma'am," said Marty. "*She* was once; and I think—"

But Marty could not possibly explain the complications of her thought on this matter—which was nothing less than one of extraordinary acuteness for a girl so young and inexperienced—namely, that he saw danger to two hearts, naturally honest, in Grace being thrown back into Winterborne's society by the neglect of her husband. Mrs. Charmond, however, with the almost supersensory means to knowledge which women have on such occasions, quite understood what Marty had intended to convey; and the picture thus exhibited to her of lives drifting awry, involving the wreck of poor Marty's hopes, prompted her to more generous resolves than all Melbury's

remonstrances had been able to stimulate.

Full of the new feeling she bade the girl good afternoon, and went on over the stumps of hazel to where Grace and Winterborne were standing. They saw her approach, and Winterborne said "She is coming to you; it is a good omen. She dislikes me, so I'll go away." He accordingly retreated to where he had been working before Grace came, and Grace's formidable rival approached her, each woman taking the other's measure as she drew near.

"Dear—Mrs. Fitzpiers," said Felice Charmond with some inward turmoil which stopped her speech. "I have not seen you for a long time."

She held out her hand tentatively, while Grace stood like a wild animal on first confronting a mirror or other puzzling product of civilisation. Was it really Mrs. Charmond speaking to her thus? If it was she could no longer form any guess as to what life signified.

"I want to talk to you," said Mrs. Charmond sensitively, for the gaze of the young woman had chilled her through. "Can you walk on with me till we are quite alone?"

Sick with distaste Grace nevertheless complied, as by clockwork, and they moved evenly side by side into the deeper recesses of the woods. They went further, much further than Mrs. Charmond had meant to go; but she could not begin her conversation, and in default of it kept walking.

"I have seen your father," she at length resumed. "And—I am much troubled by what he told me."

"What did he tell you? I have not been admitted to his confidence on anything he may have said to you."

"Nevertheless, why should I repeat to you what you can easily divine?"

"True—true," returned Grace mournfully. "Why should you repeat what we both know to be in our minds already?"

"Mrs. Fitzpiers, your husband—"

The moment that the speaker's tongue touched the dangerous subject a vivid look of self-consciousness flashed over her; in which her heart revealed, as by a lightning gleam, what filled it to overflowing. So transitory was the expression that none but a quick-sensed woman, and she in Grace's position, would have had the power to catch its meaning. Upon her the phase was not lost.

"Then you *do* love him!" she exclaimed in a tone of much surprise.

"What do you mean, my young friend?"

"Why," cried Grace, "I thought till now that you had only been cruelly flirting with my husband to amuse your idle moments—a rich lady with a poor professional gentleman whom in her heart she despised not much less than her who belongs to him. But I guess from your manner that you love him desperately; and I don't hate you as I did before. . . . Yes, indeed," continued Mrs. Fitzpiers, with a trembling tongue, "since it is not playing in your case at all, but *real*—Oh, I do pity you, more than I despise you! For you will *s-s-suffer* most!"

Mrs. Charmond was now as much agitated as Grace. "I ought not to allow myself to argue with you," she exclaimed. "I demean myself by doing it. But I liked you once, and for the sake of that time I try to tell you how mistaken you are!" Much of her confusion resulted from her wonder and alarm at finding herself, in a sense, dominated mentally and emotionally by this simple school-girl. "I do not love him!" she went on with desperate untruth. "It was a kindness—my making somewhat more of him than one usually does of one's doctor. I was lonely; I talked—well, I trifled with him. I am very sorry if such child's playing out of pure friendship has been a serious matter to you. Who could have expected it? But the world is so simple here."

"Oh, that's affectation," said Grace shaking her head. "It is no use—

you love him. I can see in your face that in this matter of my husband you have not let your acts belie your feelings. During these last four or six months you have been terribly indiscreet; but you have not been insincere; and that almost disarms me."

"I *have* been insincere—if you will have the word—I mean I *have* coquetted, and do *not* love him!"

But Grace clung to her position like a limpet. "You may have trifled with others; but him you love as you never loved another man."

"Oh, well—I won't argue," said Mrs. Charmond, laughing faintly. "And you come to reproach me for it, child."

"No," said Grace magnanimously. "You may go on loving him if you like—I don't mind at all. You'll find it, let me tell you, a bitterer business for yourself than for me in the end. He'll get tired of you soon, as tired as can be—you don't know him so well as I!—and then you may wish you had never seen him!"

Mrs. Charmond had grown quite pale and weak under this prophecy. It was extraordinary that Grace, whom almost every one would have characterised as a gentle girl, should be of tougher fibre than her interlocutor. "You exaggerate—cruel, silly young woman," she reiterated writhing with little agonies. "It is nothing but playful friendship—nothing! It will be proved by my future conduct. I shall at once refuse to see him more—since it will make no difference to my heart, and much to my name."

"I question if you will refuse to see him again," said Grace dryly, as she bent a sapling down. "But I am not incensed against you as you are against me," she added, abandoning the tree to its natural perpendicular. "Before I came I had been despising you for wanton cruelty; now I only pity you for misplaced affection. When Edgar has gone out of the house in hope of seeing you, at seasonable hours and unseasonable; when I have found him riding miles and miles across the

country at midnight, and risking his life, and getting covered with mud, to get a glimpse of you, I have called him a foolish man—the plaything of a finished coquette. I thought that what was getting to be a tragedy to me was a comedy to you. But now I see that tragedy lies on your side of the situation no less than on mine, and more; that if I have felt trouble at my position you have felt anguish at yours; that if I have had disappointments you have had despairs. Heaven may fortify me—God help you!”

“I cannot attempt to reply to your ravings,” returned the other, struggling to restore a dignity which had completely collapsed. “My acts will be my proofs. In the world which you have seen nothing of, friendships between men and women are not unknown, and it would have been better both for you and your father if you had each judged me more respectfully, and left me alone. As it, is I wish never to see or speak to you, madam, any more.”

Grace bowed, and Mrs. Charmond turned away. The two went apart in directly opposite courses, and were soon hidden from each other by their umbrageous surroundings and by the shadows of eve.

In the excitement of their long argument they had walked onward and zigzagged about without regarding direction or distance. All sound of the woodcutters had long since faded into remoteness, and even had not the interval been too great for hearing them they would have been silent and homeward bound at this twilight hour. But Grace went on her course without any misgiving, though there was much underwood here with only the narrowest passages for walking, across which brambles hung. She had not, however, traversed this, the wildest, part of the wood since her childhood, and the transformation of outlines had been great; old trees which once were landmarks had been felled or blown down, and the bushes which then had been small and scrubby were now large and overhanging. She soon found that

her ideas as to direction were vague—that she had indeed no ideas as to direction at all. If the evening had not been growing so dark, and the wind had not put on its night-moan so distinctly, Grace would not have minded; but she was rather frightened now, and began to strike across hither and thither in random courses.

Denser grew the darkness, more developed the wind-voices, and still no recognisable spot or outlet of any kind appeared, nor any sound of the Hinctocks floated near, though she had wandered probably between one and two hours, and began to be weary. She was vexed at her foolishness, since the ground she had covered, if in a straight line, must inevitably have taken her out of the wood to some remote village or other; but she had wasted her forces in countermarches; and now, in much alarm, wondered if she would have to pass the night here. She stood still to meditate, and fancied that between the sighing of the wind she heard shuffling footsteps on the leaves heavier than those of rabbits or hares. Though fearing at first to meet anybody on the chance of his being a friend, she decided that the fellow night-rambler, even if a poacher, would not injure her, and that he might possibly be some one sent to search for her. She accordingly shouted a rather timid “Hoi!”

The cry was immediately returned by the other person; and Grace running at once in the direction whence it came beheld an indistinct figure hastening up to her as rapidly. They were almost in each other's arms before she recognised the outline and white veil of her whom she had parted from an hour and half before—Mrs. Charmond.

“I have lost my way, I have lost my way,” cried the latter. “Oh—is it indeed you? I am so glad to meet you or anybody. I have been wandering up and down ever since we parted, and am nearly dead with terror and misery and fatigue!”

“So am I,” said Grace. “What shall we do?”

"You won't go away from me!" asked her companion anxiously.

"No, indeed. Are you very tired?"

"I can scarcely move, and I am scratched dreadfully about the ankles."

Grace reflected. "Perhaps, as it is dry under foot, the best thing for us to do would be to sit down for half an hour, and then start again when we have thoroughly rested. By walking straight we must come to a track leading somewhere, before the morning."

They found a clump of bushy hollies which afforded a shelter from the wind, and sat down under it, some tufts of dead fern, crisp and dry, that remained from the previous season, forming a sort of nest for them. But it was cold nevertheless on this March night, particularly for Grace, who, with the sanguine prematurity of youth in matters of dress, had considered it springtime, and hence was not so warmly clad as Mrs. Charmond, who still wore her winter furs. But after sitting awhile the latter lady shivered no less than Grace as the warmth imparted by her hasty walking began to go off; and they felt the cold air drawing through the holly leaves which scratched their backs and shoulders. Moreover they could hear some drops of rain falling on the trees, though none reached the nook in which they had ensconced themselves.

"If we were to cling close together," said Mrs. Charmond, "we should keep each other warm. But," she added in an uneven voice, "I suppose you won't come near me for the world!"

"Why not?"

"Because—well, you know."

"Yes I will—I don't hate you at all."

They consequently crept up to one another, and being in the dark, lonely, and weary, did what neither had dreamed of doing beforehand, clasped each other closely. Mrs. Charmond's furs consoling Grace's cold face, and each one's body as she breathed alternately heaving against that of her companion, while the funeral trees rocked, and chanted dirges unceasingly.

When a few minutes had been spent thus Mrs. Charmond said—"I am so wretched!" in a heavy emotional whisper.

"You are frightened," said Grace kindly. "But there is nothing to fear; I know these woods well."

"I am not at all frightened at the wood, but I am at other things."

Mrs. Charmond embraced Grace more and more tightly, and the younger woman could feel her neighbour's breathings grow deeper and more spasmodic, as though uncontrollable feelings were germinating.

"After I had left you," Felice went on, "I regretted something I had said. I have to make a confession—I must make it!" she whispered brokenly, the instinct to indulge in warmth of sentiment which had led this woman of passions to respond to Fitzpiers in the first place leading her now to find luxurious comfort in opening her heart to his wife. "I said to you I could give him up without pain or deprivation—that he had only been my pastime. That was untrue—it was said to deceive you. I could not do it without much pain; and what is more dreadful I cannot give him up—even if I would—of myself alone."

"Why? Because you love him, you mean."

Felice Charmond denoted assent by a movement.

"I knew I was right!" said Grace exaltedly. "But that should not deter you," she presently added in a moral tone. "Oh, do struggle against it, and you will conquer!"

"You are so simple, so simple!" cried Felice. "You think, because you guessed my assumed indifference to him to be a sham, that you know the extremes that people are capable of going to! But a good deal more may have been going on than you have fathomed with all your insight. I cannot give him up until he chooses to give up me."

"But surely you are the superior in station and in every way, and the cut must come from you."

"Tchut! Must I tell verbatim,

you simple child? Oh, I suppose I must! It will eat away my heart if I do not let out all, after meeting you like this and finding how guileless you are!" She thereupon whispered a few words in the girl's ear, and burst into a violent fit of sobbing.

Grace started roughly away from the shelter of the furs, and sprang to her feet.

"Oh, my great heaven!" she exclaimed, thunderstruck at a revelation transcending her utmost suspicion. "Can it be—can it be!"

She turned as if to hasten away. But Felice Charmond's sobs came to her ear: deep darkness circled her about, and she did not know which way to go. After a moment of energy she felt mild again, and turned to the motionless woman at her feet.

"Are you rested?" she asked, in what seemed her own voice grown ten years older.

Without an answer Mrs. Charmond slowly rose.

"You mean to betray me!" she said out of the bitterest depths of her soul. "Oh fool, fool I!"

"No," said Grace shortly. "I mean no such thing. But let us be quick now. We have a serious undertaking before us. Think of nothing but going straight on."

They walked on in profound silence, pulling back boughs now growing wet, and treading down woodbine, but still keeping a pretty straight course. Grace began to be thoroughly worn out, and her companion too, when, on a sudden they broke into the deserted highway at the hill top, on which the Sherton man had waited for Mrs. Dollery's van. Grace recognised the spot as soon as she looked around her.

"How we have got here I cannot tell," she said with cold civility. "We have made a complete circuit of Little Hintock. The hazel copse is quite on the other side. Now we have only to follow the road."

They dragged themselves onward, turned into the lane, passed the track

to Little Hintock, and so reached the park.

"Here I turn back," said Grace in the same passionless voice. "You are quite near home."

Mrs. Charmond stood inert, seeming appalled by her late admission.

"I have told you something in a moment of irresistible desire to unburden my soul, which all but a fool would have kept silent as the grave," she said. "I cannot help it now. Is it to be a secret, or do you mean war?"

"A secret, certainly," said Grace mournfully. "How can you expect war from such a helpless, wretched being as I!"

"And I'll do my best not to see him. I am his slave; but I'll try."

Grace was naturally kind; but she could not help using a small dagger now.

"Pray don't distress yourself," she said with exquisitely fine scorn. "You may see him—for me." Had she been wounded instead of mortified she could not have used the words; but Fitzpiers's hold upon her heart was slight.

They parted thus and there, and Grace went moodily homeward. Passing Marty's cottage she observed through the window that the girl was writing instead of chopping as usual, and wondered what her correspondence could be. Directly afterwards she met people in search of her, and reached the house to find all in serious alarm. She soon explained that she had lost her way, and her general depression was attributed to exhaustion on that account.

Could she have known what Marty was writing she would have been surprised.

The rumour which agitated the other folk of Hintock had reached the young girl, and she was penning a letter to Fitzpiers, to tell him that Mrs. Charmond wore the writer's hair in addition to her own. It was poor Marty's only card, and she played it, knowing nothing of fashion, and thinking her revelation a fatal one for a lover.

(To be continued.)

M. FEUILLET'S 'LA MORTE.'

IN his latest novel M. Octave Feuillet adds two charming people to that chosen group of personages in which he loves to trace the development of the more serious elements of character amid the refinements and artifices of modern society, and which make such good company. The proper function of fictitious literature in affording us a refuge into a world slightly better—better conceived, or better finished—than the real one, is, in most instances, performed, less by the imaginary events at which a novelist causes us to assist, than by the imaginary persons to whom he introduces us. The situations of M. Feuillet's novels are indeed of a real and intrinsic importance: tragic crises, inherent in the general conditions of human nature itself, or which arise necessarily out of the special conditions of modern life. Still, with him, in the actual result, they become subordinate, as it is their tendency to do in real life, to the characters they help to form. Often his most attentive reader will have forgotten the actual details of his plot; while the soul, tried, enlarged, shaped in it, remains as a well-fixed type in the memory. He may return a second or third time to 'Sibylle,' or 'Le Journal d'une Femme,' or 'Les Amours de Philippe,' and watch, surprised afresh, the clean, dainty, word-sparing literary operation (word-sparing, yet with no loss of real grace or ease), which, sometimes in a few pages, with the perfect logic of a problem of Euclid, complicates and unravels some moral embarrassment really worthy of a trained dramatic expert. But the characters themselves, the agents in those difficult, revealing situations, such a reader will recognise as old acquaintances after the first reading, feeling for

them as for some gifted and attractive persons he has known in the actual world—Raoul de Chalys, Henri de Lerne, Madame de Télec, Jeanne de la Roche-Ermel—many others; to whom must now be added Bernard and Aliette de Vaudricourt.

"How I love those people!" cries Mademoiselle de Courteheuse, of Madame de Sévigné and some other of her literary favourites in the days of the Grand Monarch. "What good company! What pleasure they took in high things! How much more worthy they were than the people who live now!"—What good company! That is precisely what the admirer of M. Feuillet's books feels as one by one he places them on his book-shelf, to be sought again. What we propose here is not to tell his last story, but to give the English reader specimens of his most recent effort at characterisation.

It is with the journal of Bernard himself that the story opens, September, 187—. Bernard-Maurice Hugon de Montauret, Vicomte de Vaudricourt, is on a visit to his uncle, the head of his family, at La Savinière, a country-house somewhere between Normandy and Brittany. This uncle, in manner an artificial old Parisian, but honest in purpose, a good talker, and full of real affection for his heir Bernard, is one of M. Feuillet's good minor characters—one of the quietly humorous figures with which he relieves his more serious company. Bernard, with whom the refinements of a man of fashion in the Parisian world by no means disguise a powerful intelligence cultivated by wide reading, has had thoughts during his tedious stay at La Savinière of writing a history of Louis the Fourteenth, the library of

a neighbouring house being rich in memoirs of that period. Finally, he prefers to write his own story, a story so much more interesting to himself; to write it at a peculiar crisis in his life, the moment when his uncle, unmarried, but anxious to perpetuate his race, is bent on providing him with a wife, and indeed has one in view.

The accomplished Bernard, with many graces of person, by his own confession takes nothing seriously. As to that matter of religious beliefs, "the breeze of the age, and of science, has blown over him, as it has blown over his contemporaries, and left empty space there." Still, when he saw his childish religious faith departing from him, as he thinks it must necessarily depart from all intelligent male Parisians, he wept. But since that moment a gaiety, serene and imperturbable, has been the mainstay of his happily constituted character. The girl to whom his uncle desires to see him united—odd, quixotic, intelligent, with a sort of pathetic and delicate grace, and herself very religious—belongs to an old-fashioned, devout family, resident at Varaville, near by. M. Feuillet, with half a dozen fine touches of his admirable pencil makes us see the place. And the enterprise has at least sufficient interest to keep Bernard in the country, which the young Parisian detests. "This piquant episode of my life," he writes, "seems to me to be really deserving of study; to be worth etching off, day by day, by an observer well-informed on the subject."

Recognising in himself, though as his one real fault, that he can take nothing seriously in heaven or earth, Bernard de Vaudricourt, like all M. Feuillet's favourite young men, so often erring or corrupt, is a man of scrupulous "honour." He has already shown disinterestedness in wishing his rich uncle to marry again. His friends at Varaville think so well-mannered a young man more of a Christian than

he really is. Still, at all events, he will never owe his happiness to a falsehood. If he has great faults, hypocrisy at least is no part of them. In oblique paths he finds himself ill at ease. Decidedly, as he thinks, he was born for straight ways, for loyalty in all his enterprises; and he congratulates himself upon the fact.

In truth, Bernard has merits which he ignores, at least in this first part of his journal: merits which are necessary to explain the influence he is able to exercise from the first over such a character as Mademoiselle de Courteheuse. His charm, in fact, is in the union of that gay and apparently wanton nature with a genuine power of appreciating devotion in others, which becomes devotion in himself. With all the much-cherished elegance and worldly glitter of his personality, he is capable of apprehending, of understanding and being touched by the presence of great things. In spite of that happy lightness of heart, so jealously fenced about, he is to be wholly caught at last, as he is worthy to be, by the serious, the generous influence of things. In proportion to his immense worldly strength is his capacity for the immense pity which breaks his heart.

In a few lifelike touches M. Feuillet brings out, as if it were indeed a thing of ordinary existence, the simple yet delicate life of a French country-house, the ideal life in an ideal France. Bernard is paying a morning visit at the old turreted home of the "pre-historic" Courteheuse family. Mademoiselle Aliette de Courteheuse, a studious girl, though a bold and excellent rider—Mademoiselle de Courteheuse, "with her hair of that strange colour of fine ashes"—has conducted her visitor to see the library:

"One day she took me to see the library, rich in works of the seventeenth century and in memoirs relating to that time. I remarked there also a curious collection of engravings of the same period. 'Your father,' I observed,

'had a strong predilection for the age of Louis the Fourteenth.'

"My father lived in that age," she answered gravely. And as I looked at her with surprise, and a little embarrassed, she added, 'He made me live there too, in his company.'

"And then the eyes of this singular girl filled with tears. She turned away, took a few steps to suppress her emotion, and returning, pointed me to a chair. Then seating herself on the step of the book-case, she said, 'I must explain my father to you.'

"She was half a minute collecting her thoughts: then, speaking with an expansion of manner not habitual with her, hesitating, and blushing deeply, whenever she was about to utter a word that might seem a shade too serious for lips so youthful:—'My father,' she proceeded, 'died of the consequences of a wound he had received at Patay. That may show you that he loved his country, but he was no lover of his own age. He possessed in the highest degree the love of order; and order was a thing nowhere to be seen. He had a horror of disorder; and he saw it everywhere. In those last years, especially, his reverence, his beliefs, his tastes, all alike were ruffled to the point of actual suffering, by whatever was done and said and written around him. Deeply saddened by the conditions of the present time, he habituated himself to find a refuge in the past, and the seventeenth century more particularly offered him the kind of society in which he would have wished to live—a society, well-ordered, polished, lettered, believing. More and more he loved to shut himself up in it. More and more also he loved to make the moral discipline and the literary tastes of that favourite age prevail in his own household. You may even have remarked that he carried his predilection into minute matters of arrangement and decoration. You can see from this window the straight paths, the box in patterns, the yew trees and clipped alleys of our garden. You may notice that in our garden-beds we have none but flowers of the period—lilies, rose-mallows, immortelles, rose-pinks, in short, what people call parsonage flowers—*des fleurs de curé*. Our old sylvan tapestries, similarly, are of that age. You see too that all our furniture, from presses and sideboards, down to our little tables and our arm-chairs, is in the severest style of Louis the Fourteenth. My father did not appreciate the dainty research of our modern luxury. He maintained that our excessive care for the comforts of life weakened mind as well as body. That,' added the girl with a laugh,—'that is why you find your chair so hard when you come to see us.'

"Then, with resumed gravity—'It was thus that my father endeavoured, by the very aspect and arrangement of outward things, to promote in himself the imaginary presence of the epoch in which his thoughts delighted.

As for myself—need I tell you that I was the confidant of that father, so well-beloved: a confidant touched by his sorrows, full of indignation at his disappointments, charmed by his consolations. Here, precisely—surrounded by those books which we read together, and which he taught me to love—it is here that I have passed the pleasantest hours of my youth. In common we indulged our enthusiasm for those days of faith; of the quiet life; its blissful hours of leisure well-secured; for the French language in its beauty and purity; the delicate, the noble urbanity, which was then the honour and the special mark of our country, but has ceased to be so.'

"She paused, with a little confusion, as I thought, at the warmth of her last words.

"And then, just to break the silence, 'You have explained,' I said, 'an impression which I have experienced again and again in my visits here, and which has sometimes reached the intensity of an actual illusion, though a very agreeable one. The look of your house, its style, its tone and keeping, carried me two centuries back so completely that I should hardly have been surprised to hear Monsieur le Prince, Madame de la Fayette, or Madame de Sévigné herself, announced at your drawing-room door.'

"'Would it might be!' said Mademoiselle de Courteuse. 'Ah! Monsieur, how I love those people! What good company! What pleasure they took in high things! How much more worthy they were than the people who live now!' I tried to calm a little this retrospective enthusiasm, so much to the prejudice of my contemporaries and of myself. 'Most truly, Mademoiselle,' I said, 'the age which you regret had its rare merits—merits which I appreciate as you do. But then, need one say that that society, so regular, so choice in appearance, had, like our own, below the surface, its troubles, its disorders? I see here many of the memoirs of that time. I can't tell exactly which of them you may or may not have read, and so I feel a certain difficulty in speaking.'

"She interrupted me: 'Ah!' she said, with entire simplicity, 'I understand you. I have not read all you see here. But I have read enough of it to know that my friends in that past age had, like those who live now, their passions, their weaknesses, their mistakes. But, as my father used to say to me, all that did but pass over a ground of what was solid and serious, which always discovered itself again anew. There were great faults then; but there were also great repentances. There was a certain higher region to which everything conducted—even what was evil.' She blushed deeply: then rising a little suddenly, 'A long speech!' she said: 'Forgive me! I am not usually so very talkative. It is because my father was in question: and I should wish his memory to be as dear and as venerable to all the rest of the world as it is to me.'

We pass over the many little dramatic intrigues and misunderstandings, with the more or less adroit interferences of the uncle, which raise and lower alternately Bernard's hopes. M. Feuillet has more than once tried his hand with striking success in the portraiture of French ecclesiastics. He has drawn none better than the Bishop of Saint-Méen, uncle of Mademoiselle de Courteuse, to whose interests he is devoted. Bernard feels that to gain the influence of this prelate would be to gain his cause; and the opportunity for an interview comes.

"Monseigneur de Courteuse would seem to be little over fifty years of age: he is rather tall, and very thin: the eyes, black and full of life, are encircled by a ring of deep brown. His speech and gesture are animated, and, at times, as if carried away. He adopts frequently a sort of furious manner which on a sudden melts away into the smile of an honest man. He has beautiful silvery hair, lying in vagrant locks over his forehead, and beautiful bishop's hands. As he becomes calm he has an imposing way of gently resettling himself in his sacerdotal dignity. To sum up:—his is a physiognomy full of passion, consumed with zeal, yet still frank and sincere.

"I was hardly seated, when with a motion of the hand he invited me to speak.

"*'Monseigneur!'* I said, *'I come to you (you understand me!)* as to my last resource. What I am now doing is almost an act of despair; for it might seem at first sight that no member of the family of Mademoiselle de Courteuse must show himself more pitiless than yourself towards the faults with which I am reproached. I am an unbeliever; you are an apostle! And yet, Monseigneur, it is often at the hands of saintly priests, such as yourself, that the guilty find most indulgence. And then, I am not indeed guilty: I have but wandered. I am refused the hand of your niece because I do not share her faith—your own faith. But, Monseigneur, unbelief is not a crime, it is a misfortune. I know people often say, a man denies God when by his own conduct he has brought himself into a condition in which he may well desire that God does not exist. In this way he is made guilty, or, in a sense, responsible for his incredulity. For myself, Monseigneur, I have consulted my conscience with an entire sincerity; and although my youth has been amiss, I am certain that my atheism proceeds from no sentiment of personal interest. On the contrary, I may tell you with truth that the day on which I perceived my faith come to nought, the day on which I lost hope in God, I shed

the bitterest tears of my life. In spite of appearances, I am not so light a spirit as people think. I am not one of those for whom God, when He disappears, leaves no sense of a void place. Believe me!—a man may love sport, his club, his worldly habits, and yet have his hours of thought, of self-recollection. Do you suppose that in those hours one does not feel the frightful discomfort of an existence with no moral basis, without principles, with no outlook beyond this world? And yet, what can one do? You would tell me forthwith, in the goodness, the compassion, which I read in your eyes; Confide to me your objections to religion, and I will try to solve them. Monseigneur, I should hardly know how to answer you. My objections are *'Legion!'* They are without number, like the stars in the sky: they come to us on all sides, from every quarter of the horizon, as if on the wings of the wind; and they leave in us, as they pass, ruins only, and darkness. Such has been my experience, and that of many others; and it has been as involuntary as it is irreparable.

"*'And I—Monsieur!'* said the bishop, suddenly, casting on me one of his angust looks, *'Do you suppose that I am but a play-actor in my cathedral church!'*

"*'Monseigneur!'*

"*'Yes!'* Listening to you, one would suppose that we were come to a period of the world in which one must needs be either an atheist or a hypocrite! Personally, I claim to be neither one nor the other.

"*'Need I defend myself on that point, Monseigneur? Need I say that I did not come here to give you offence?'*

"*'Doubtless! doubtless! Well, Monsieur, I admit;—not without great reserves, mind! for one is always more or less responsible for the atmosphere in which he lives, the influences to which he is subject, for the habitual turn he gives to his thoughts; still, I admit that you are the victim of the incredulity of the age, that you are altogether guiltless in your scepticism, your atheism! since you have no fear of hard words. Is it therefore any the less certain that the union of a fervent believer, such as my niece, with a man like yourself would be a moral disorder of which the consequences might be disastrous? Do you think it could be my duty, as a relative of Mademoiselle de Courteuse, her spiritual father, as a prelate of the Church, to lend my hands to such a disorder, to preside over the shocking union of two souls separated by the whole width of heaven!'* The bishop, in proposing that question, kept his eyes fixed ardently on mine.

"*'Monseigneur, I answered, after a moment's embarrassment, 'you know as well as, and better than I the condition of the world, and of our country, at this time. You know that unhappily I am not an exception: that men of faith are rare in it. And permit me to tell you my whole mind. If I must needs suffer*

the inconsolable misfortune of renouncing the happiness I had hoped for, are you quite sure that the man to whom one of these days you will give your niece may not be something more than a sceptic, or even an atheist !

"What, Monsieur !"

"A hypocrite, Monseigneur ! Mademoiselle de Courtehouse is beautiful enough, rich enough, to excite the ambition of those who may be less scrupulous than I. As for me, if you now know that I am a sceptic, you know also that I am a man of honour : and there is something in that !"

"A man of honour !" the bishop muttered to himself, with a little petulance and hesitation, 'A man of honour ! Yes, I believe it !' Then, after an interval, 'Come, Monsieur,' he said gently, 'your case is not as desperate as you suppose. My Aliette is one of those young enthusiasts through whom Heaven sometimes works miracles.' And Bernard refusing any encouragement of that hope, (the 'very roots of faith are dead' in him for ever), 'since you think that,' the bishop answers, 'it is honest to say so. But God has His ways.'

Soon after, the journal comes to an end with that peculiar crisis in Bernard's life which had suggested the writing of it. Aliette, with the approval of her family, has given him her hand. Bernard accepts it with the full purpose of doing all he can to make his wife as happy as she is charming and beloved. The virginal first period of their married life in their dainty house in Paris—the pure and beautiful picture of the mother, the father, and at last the child, a little girl, Jeanne—is presented with M. Feuillet's usual grace. Certain embarrassments succeed ; the development of what was ill-matched in their union ; but still with mutual loyalty. A far-reaching acquaintance with, and reflection upon, the world and its ways, especially the Parisian world, has gone into the apparently slight texture of these pages. The accomplished playwright may be recognised in the skilful touches with which M. Feuillet, unrivalled, as his regular readers know, in his power of breathing higher notes into the frivolous prattle of fashionable French life, develops the tragic germ in the elegant, youthful household. Amid the distractions of a society, frivolous,

perhaps vulgar, Aliette's mind is still set on greater things ; and, in spite of a thousand rude discouragements, she maintains her generous hope for Bernard's restoration to faith. One day, a little roughly, he bids her relinquish that dream finally. She looks at him with the moist, suppliant eyes of some weak animal at bay. Then his native goodness returns. In a softened tone he owns himself wrong.

"As to conversions—no one must be despaired of. Do you remember M. de Rancé ? He lived in your favourite age—M. de Rancé. Well ! before he became the reformer of La Trappe he had been a worlbling like me, and a great sceptic—what people called a libertine. Still he became a saint ! It is true he had a terrible reason for it. Do you know what it was converted him ?"

"Aliette gave a sign that she did not know.

"Well ! he returned to Paris after a few days' absence. He ran straight to the lady he loved ; Madame Montbazou, I think : he went up a little staircase of which he had the key, and the first thing he saw on the table in the middle of the room was the head of his mistress, of which the doctors were about to make a *post-mortem* examination."

"If I were sure," said Aliette, "that my head could have such power, I would love to die."

"She said it in a low voice, but with such an accent of loving sincerity that her husband had a sensation of a sort of painful disquiet. He smiled, however, and tapping her cheek softly, 'Folly !' he said. 'A head, charming as yours, has no need to be dead that it may work miracles !'"

Certainly M. Feuillet has some weighty charges to bring against the Parisian society of our day. When Aliette revolts from a world of gossip, which reduces all minds alike to the same level of vulgar mediocrity, Bernard, on his side, can perceive there a deterioration of tone which shocks his sense of honour. As a man of honour, he can hardly trust his wife to the gaieties of a society which welcomes all the world "to amuse itself in undress."

"It happened that at this perplexed period in the youthful household, one and the same person became the recipient both of the tearful confidences of Madame de Vaudricourt and those of her husband. It was the

Duchess of Castel-Moret [she is another of M. Feuillet's admirable minor sketches], an old friend of the Vaudricourt family, and the only woman with whom Aliette since her arrival in Paris had formed a kind of intimacy. The Duchess was far from sharing, on points of morality, and above all of religion, the severe and impassioned orthodoxy of her young friend. She had lived, it is true, an irreproachable life, but less in consequence of defined principles than by instinct and natural taste. She admitted to herself that she was an honest woman as a result of her birth, and had no further merit in the matter. She was old, very careful of herself, and a pleasant aroma floated about her, below her silvery hair. People loved her for her grace—the grace of another time than ours—for her wit, and her worldly wisdom, which she placed freely at the disposal of the public. Now and then she made a match: but her special gift lay rather in the way in which she came to the rescue when a marriage turned out ill. And she had no sincere: the result was that she passed the best part of her time in repairing family rents. That might 'last its time,' she would say. 'And then we know that what has been well mended sometimes lasts better than what is new.'

A little later, Bernard, in the interest of Aliette, has chivalrously determined to quit Paris. At Valmoutiers, a fine old place in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau, they established themselves for a country life. Here Aliette tastes the happiest days since her marriage. Bernard, of course, after a little time is greatly bored. But so far they have never seriously doubted of their great love for each other. It is here that M. Feuillet brings on the scene a kind of character new in his books; perhaps hardly worthy of the other company there; a sort of female Monsieur de Camors, but without his grace and tenderness, and who actually commits a crime. How would the morbid charms of M. de Camors have vanished, if, as his wife once suspected of him, he had ever contemplated crime! And surely, the showy insolent charms of Sabine de Tallevaut, beautiful, intellectually gifted, supremely Amazonian, yet withal not drawn with M. Feuillet's usual fineness, scarcely hold out for the reader, any more than for Bernard himself, in the long run, against the vulgarising touch

of her cold wickedness. Living in the neighbourhood of Valmoutiers, in a somewhat melancholy abode (the mystery of which in the eyes of Bernard adds to her poetic charm) with her guardian, an old, rich, free-thinking doctor, devoted to research, she comes to Valmoutiers one night in his company on the occasion of the alarming illness of the only child. They arrive escorted by Bernard himself. The little Jeanne, wrapped in her coverlet, was placed upon the table of her play-room, which was illuminated as if for a party. The illness, the operation (skilfully performed by the old doctor) which restores her to life, are described with that seemingly simple pathos in which M. Feuillet's consummate art hides itself. Sabine remains to watch the child's recovery, and becomes an intimate. In vain Bernard struggles against the first real passion of his life;—does everything but send its object out of his sight. Aliette has divined their secret. In the fatal illness which follows soon after, Bernard watches over her with tender solicitude; hoping against hope that the disease may take a favourable turn.

"My child," he said to her one day, taking the hand which she abandoned to him, "I have just been scolding old Victoire. She is losing her head. In spite of the repeated assurances of the doctors, she is alarmed at seeing you a little worse than usual to-day, and has had the *Curé* sent for. Do you wish to see him?"

"Pray, let me see him!"

"She sighed heavily, and fixed upon her husband her large blue eyes, full of anguish—an anguish so sharp and so singular that he felt frozen to the marrow.

"He could not help saying with deep emotion, 'Do you love me no longer, Aliette?'"

"For ever!" murmured the poor child.

"He leaned over her with a long kiss upon the forehead. She saw tears stealing from the eyes of her husband, and seemed as if surprised."

Soon afterwards Aliette is dead, to the profound sorrow of Bernard. Less than two years later he has become the husband of Mademoiselle Talle-

vaut. It was about two years after his marriage with Sabine that Bernard resumed the journal with which we began. In the pages which he now adds he seems at first unchanged. How then as to that story of M. de Rancé, the reformer of La Trappe, finding the head of his dead mistress; an incident which the reader of 'La Morte' will surely have taken as a "presentiment"? Aliette had so taken it. "A head so charming as yours," Bernard had assured her tenderly, "does not need to be dead that it may work miracles!"—How, in the few pages that remain, will M. Feuillet justify that, and certain other delicate touches of presentiment, and at the same time justify the title of his book?

The journal is recommenced in February. On the twentieth of April Bernard writes, at Valmoutiers:

"Under pretext of certain urgently needed repairs I am come to pass a week at Valmoutiers, and get a little pure air. By my orders they have kept Aliette's room under lock and key since the day when she left it in her coffin. To-day I re-entered it for the first time. There was a vague odour of her favourite perfumes. My poor Aliette! why was I unable, as you so ardently desired, to share your gentle creed, and associate myself to the life of your dreams, the life of honesty and peace? Compared with that which is mine to-day, it seems to me like paradise. What a terrible scene it was, here in this room! What a memory! I can still see the last look she fixed on me, a look almost of terror! and how quickly she died! I have taken the room for my own. But I shall not remain here long. I intend to go for a few days to Varaville. I want to see my little girl: her dear angel's face.

"VALMOUTIERS, April 22.—What a change there has been in the world since my childhood: since my youth even! what a surprising change in so short a period, in the moral atmosphere we are breathing! Then we were, as it were, impregnated with the thought of God—a just God, but benevolent and father-like. We really lived under His eyes, as under the eyes of a parent, with respect and fear, but with confidence. We felt sustained by His invisible but undoubted presence. We spoke to Him, and it seemed that He answered. And now we feel ourselves alone—as it were abandoned in the immensity of the universe. We live in a world, hard, savage, full of hatred; whose one cruel law is the struggle for exist-

ence, and in which we are no more than those natural elements, let loose to war with each other in fierce selfishness, without pity, with no appeal beyond, no hope of final justice. And above us, in place of the good God of our happy youth, nothing, any more! or worse than nothing—a deity, barbarous and ironical, who cares nothing at all about us."

The aged mother of Aliette, hitherto the guardian of his daughter, is lately dead. Bernard proposes to take the child away with him to Paris. The child's old nurse objects. On April the twenty-seventh, Bernard writes:

"For a moment—for a few moments—in that room where I have been shutting myself up with the shadow of my poor dead one, a horrible thought had come to me. I had driven it away as an insane fancy. But now, —yes! it is becoming a reality. Shall I write this? Yes! I will write it. It is my duty to do so; for from this moment the journal, begun in so much gaiety of heart, is but my last will and testament. If I should disappear from the world, the secret must not die with me. It must be bequeathed to the natural protectors of my child. Her interests, if not her life, are concerned therein.

"Here, then, is what passed: I had not arrived in time to render my last duty to Madame de Courteheuse. The family was already dispersed. I found here only Aliette's brother. To him I communicated my plan concerning the child, and he could but approve. My intention was to bring away with Jeanne her nurse Victoire, who had brought her up, as she brought up her mother. But she is old, and in feeble health, and I feared some difficulties on her part; the more as her attitude towards myself since the death of my first wife has been marked by an ill grace approaching to hostility. I took her aside while Jeanne was playing in the garden.

"'My good Victoire,' I said, 'while Madame de Courteheuse was living, I considered it a duty to leave her granddaughter in her keeping. Besides, no one was better fitted to watch over her education. At present my duty is to watch over it myself. I propose therefore to take Jeanne with me to Paris; and I hope that you may be willing to accompany her, and remain in her service.' When she understood my intention, the old woman, in whose hands I had noticed a faint trembling, became suddenly very pale. She fixed her firm, grey eyes upon me: 'Monsieur le Comte will not do that!'

"'Pardon me, my good Victoire, that, I shall do. I appreciate your good qualities of fidelity and devotion. I shall be very grateful if you will continue to take care of my daughter, as you have done so excellently. But for the rest, I intend to be the only master in my own

house, and the only master of my child.' She laid a hand upon my arm: 'I implore you, Monsieur, don't do this!' Her fixed look did not leave my face, and seemed to be questioning me to the very bottom of my soul. 'I have never believed it,' she murmured, 'No! I never could believe it. But if you take the child away I shall.'

"Believe what, wretched woman? believe what?"

"Her voice sank lower still. 'Believe that you knew how her mother came by her death; and that you mean the daughter to die as she did.'

"Die as her mother did?"

"Yes! by the same hand!"

"The sweat came on my forehead. I felt as it were a breathing of death upon me. But still I thrust away from me that terrible light on things.

"'Victoire!' I said, 'take care! You are no fool: you are something worse. Your hatred of the woman who has taken the place of my first wife—your blind hatred—has suggested to you odious, nay! criminal words.'

"'Ah! Ah! Monsieur!' she cried with wild energy. 'After what I have just told you, take your daughter to live with that woman if you dare.'

"I walked up and down the room awhile to collect my senses. Then, returning to the old woman, 'Yet how can I believe you?' I asked, 'If you had had the shadow of a proof of what you give me to understand, how could you have kept silence so long? How could you have allowed me to contract that hateful marriage?'

"She seemed more confident, and her voice grew gentler. 'Monsieur, it is because Madame, before she went to God, made me take oath on the crucifix to keep that secret for ever.'

"'Yet not with me, in fact,—not with me!' And I, in turn, questioned her; my eyes upon hers. She hesitated: then stammered out, 'True! not with you! because she believed, poor little soul! that . . .'

"'What did she believe? That I knew it? That I was an accomplice? Tell me!' Her eyes fell, and she made no answer. 'Is it possible, my God, is it possible? But come, sit by me here, and tell me all you know, all you saw. At what time was it you noticed anything—the precise moment?' For in truth she had been suffering for a long time past."

Victoire tells the miserable story of Sabine's crime—we must pardon what we think a not quite worthy addition to the imaginary world M. Feuillet has called up round about him, for the sake of fully knowing Bernard and Aliette. The old nurse had surprised her in the very act,

and did not credit her explanation. "When I surprised her," she goes on:

"It may already have been too late—he sure it was not the first time she had been guilty—my first thought was to give you information. But I had not the courage. Then I told Madame. I thought I saw plainly that I had nothing to tell she was not already aware of. Nevertheless she chided me almost harshly. "You know very well," she said, "that my husband is always there when Mademoiselle prepares the medicines. So that he too would be guilty. Rather than believe that, I would accept death at his hands a hundred times over!" And I remember, Monsieur, how at the very moment when she told me that, you came out from the little *boudoir*, and brought her a glass of valerian. She cast on me a terrible look and drank. A few minutes afterwards she was so ill that she thought the end was come. She begged me to give her her crucifix, and made me swear never to utter a word concerning our suspicions. It was then I sent for the priest. I have told you, Monsieur, what I know; what I have seen with my own eyes. I swear that I have said nothing but what is absolutely true." She paused. I could not answer her. I seized her old wrinkled and trembling hands and pressed them to my forehead, and wept like a child.

"May 10.—She died believing me guilty! The thought is terrible to me. I know not what to do. A creature so frail, so delicate, so sweet. 'Yes!' she said to herself, 'my husband is a murderer; what he is giving me is poison, and he knows it.' She died with that thought in her mind—her last thought. And she will never, never know that it was not so; that I am innocent; that the thought is torment to me: that I am the most unhappy of men. Ah! God, all-powerful! if you indeed exist, you see what I suffer. Have pity on me!

"Ah! how I wish I could believe that all is not over between her and me; that she sees and hears me; that she knew the truth. But I find it impossible! impossible!

"June.—That I was a criminal was her last thought, and she will never be undeceived.

"All seems so completely ended when one dies. All returns to its first elements. How credit that miracle of a personal resurrection? and yet in truth all is mystery,—miracle, around us, about us, within ourselves. The entire universe is but a continuous miracle. Man's new birth from the womb of death—is it a mystery less comprehensible than his birth from the womb of his mother?

"Those lines are the last written by Bernard de Vaudricourt. His health, for some time past disturbed by grief, was powerless against the emotions of the last terrible trial imposed on him. A malady, the exact nature of which

was not determined, in a few days assumed a mortal character. Perceiving that his end was come, he caused Monseigneur de Courteheuse to be summoned,—he desired to die in the religion of Aliette. Living, the poor child had been defeated : she prevailed in her death."

Two distinguished souls !—*deux êtres d'élite*—M. Feuillet thinks, whose fine qualities properly brought them together. When Mademoiselle de Courteheuse said of the heroes of her favourite age, that their passions, their errors, did but pass over a ground of what was solid and serious, and which always discovered itself afresh, she was unconsciously describ-

ing Bernard. Singular young brother of Monsieur de Camors—after all, certainly, more fortunate than he—he belongs to the age, which, if it had great faults, had also great repentances. In appearance, frivolous ; with all the light charm of the world, yet with that impressibility to great things, according to the law which makes the best of M. Feuillet's characters so interesting ; above all, with that capacity for pity which almost everything around him tended to suppress ; in real life, if he exists there, and certainly in M. Feuillet's pages, it is a refreshment to meet him.

SONNET.

[The author of these lines—a girl of twenty-five—was drowned in a Welsh river last August. The night before her death she was heard to say : " If I do not die soon, I think I shall make something of poetry."]

If this poor name of mine, now writ in sand
On Life's grey shore, which Time for ever laves
—A hungry ocean of unresting waves—
Might but be graven on rock, and so withstand
A little while the weather and the tide,
Great joy were mine. Alas ! I cannot guide
My chisel right to carve the stubborn stone
Of Fame ; and so the numbness of despair
Invades me ; for the sounding names are there
Of all Earth's great ones ; and methinks mine own
Fades in their music ; yet before the light
Has vanished from the sky, and unblest night,
In which no man can work, shall stain the air,
I stand and weep on the grey shore—alone.

MRS. JOHN TAYLOR, OF NORWICH.

I.

IN the earliest years of the present century, when Norwich was in its ascendant and giving its intellectual supper parties; when the learned Dr. Sayers was sitting for his likeness to Opie; when Mrs. Barbauld had retired from Palgrave to the suburbs of London; when Elizabeth Gurney and her beautiful sisters, no longer galloping about the country in their riding habits and red boots, were beginning their married lives; when little Harriet Martineau as a child was wandering round Castle Hill and trembling in terror at the depths below, at the sound of the sticks falling with dull thuds upon the feather-beds which the careful housewives of Norwich were beating in their doorways—in these pre-eventful times there lived in a house, not very far from Castle Hill, a friend of Mrs. Barbauld's, a quiet lady, Mrs. John Taylor by name, whose home was the resort of many of the most cultivated men of the day, and whose delightful companionship was justly prized and valued by them. People used to say it was well worth a journey to Norwich to spend an evening with Mrs. John Taylor. She was Mackintosh's friend; she was Mrs. Barbauld's dearest friend; in after days John Austin was her son-in-law; John Mill and Charles Austin were her intimates. Her life was spent in the simplest fashion. She stayed at home, she darned with wool, she read philosophy and poetry, she spoke her mind and she thought for herself, while she stitched, and marketed, and tended her children.

She was a type of a high-bred simple race of women, perhaps more common in those days than now. To some people seven children and limited

means might seem a serious obstacle to high mental culture, but Mrs. Taylor and her friends were of a different way of thinking; they were not ashamed of being poor, of attending to the details of life; they were only ashamed of being shabby in spirit, of mean aspirations, of threadbare slovenly interests. The seven children, reared in a wholesome and temperate, yet liberal-minded atmosphere, went their ways in after life, well prepared for the world, fully portioned with those realities and impressions which are beyond silver and gold. The two daughters, Susan and Sarah, both married. Sarah was Mrs. Austin, the translator of Ranke, of the *Story Without an End*, which children have not yet ceased to read, the mother of Lady Duff Gordon, whose name is also well remembered. Susan, the elder daughter, became the wife of Dr. Reeve, and the mother of Mr. Henry Reeve, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. It is by the kindness of this old friend that the writer has been allowed to read many of the letters from Mrs. Taylor to her early friend, to her daughters, to Dr. Reeve, her son-in-law—the faded writing flows in a still living stream of interest, solicitude, affection, anxiety, and exhortation, flowing on in even lines, and showing so much of that mingled force, of imagination and precision, which goes to make up the literary faculty.

The letters run back to the days before Mrs. Taylor's marriage, and give a vivid picture of a young lady's impressions of life a century ago; for it is more than a hundred years since Miss Susanna Cook sat down to describe what she calls a "jaunt to London," and to recapitulate all the crowding interests and delights of 1776 for the benefit of a friend, Miss Judith Dixon,

somewhat her junior in years and experience, and living tranquilly far removed from the metropolis in St. Andrew's Broad Street in Norwich.

Miss Susanna dips her pen and traces her pretty lines, and the yellow pages seem tinted still by the illumination of these bygone youthful shining mornings and evenings, brilliant anticipations and realisations, to say nothing of the dazzling lamps of Vauxhall which Miss Cook does not fail to visit. The parcel of happy people (so she describes her party) consists of the young lady herself, of a "lively young divine" and his wife, and three sisters: nor can Miss Susanna find too much praise for the most amiable girls she ever met; for the evenings fine beyond expression; for Vauxhall itself, which she had always admired, but which appears to her more enchanting than ever. Let us hope that the young ladies, the great-great-granddaughters of Miss Cook and her companions, still write in the same spirit and find balmy sights at the Colonial Exhibition and elsewhere, as well as lively young divines to escort them. But this is perhaps hoping too much, for I am told the race no longer exists. Nothing, however, not even a jaunt to London, is absolutely perfect, either in this age, or in the last. "Pity me!" writes the young lady, "Garriek played Hamlet at Drury Lane last night, and we might as well have attempted to move St. Paul's as to get in. The crowd was inconceivable." Our youthful company are only consoled at the opera by the voice of the "Siren Leoni." Susanna steadily follows up the records of her sight-seeing: she visits Wedgwood's classic potteries, which were then the fashion, she describes the models brought over by Sir William Hamilton. Her friends also take her to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Paintings, where the young ladies, we are told, "divert the gentlemen by delivering opinions with all the arrogance of connoisseurs."

Some of us may know Ramberg's

delightful print of an exhibition some ten years later, in 1787, of which a fine copy is in the studio of our own President of 1886. As one looks at the picture, the century rolls off, the sleeping palace awakens, the ladies in their nodding plumes, the courtly gentlemen, with their well-dressed legs and swords, exchange greetings. We seem at home in the unpretending rooms with the familiar pictures on the walls (the dear little strawberry-girl is hanging there among the rest); the originals of those charming figures we all know so well, are depicted gazing up at their own portraits. Rules and regulations must have been less strictly measured out then than they are now, for although umbrellas did not then play that important part which belongs to them at present, sticks and swords without number seem to have been boldly introduced into the gallery, to say nothing of a little dog frisking merrily in the foreground.

The experience of each generation varies in turn, with its dress and peculiarities; ours is (as yet) exempt from certain trials which are feelingly alluded to by Miss Cook in her correspondence, and of which Madame D'Arblay, Mrs. Barbauld, and others also bitterly complain. The elegant ladies of Sir Joshua's powdering times certainly had their own trials. We find the young traveller warmly congratulating her friend Judith upon a marvellous escape; where other head-dresses succumbed, Judith's feather had remained steady in its place. Susanna has seen many distresses occasioned by these fashionable embellishments; among the sufferers she mentions two ladies unfortunately sitting next each other at a concert, "whose heads met and becoming immediately entangled, the attempts they made to extricate themselves only increased the difficulty, until, finally, one of the fabrics was demolished." Another tragic story is that of a *belle* dancing in a *cotillon* who seems suddenly to have "lost the whole of a

majestic superstructure which rolled backwards while the company fled from the cataclysm"; one can imagine, says Miss Cook, "the falling curls and the clouds of powder, and the despair of the poor victim of this vertigo."

Susanna gives another page or two to the fashions; she describes what she calls "an anecdote upon Lady Harriet Foley which made quite a bustle." This lady appeared at Court after her marriage in a suit of white lutestring trimmed with large bunches of acorns, of which the cups had really grown upon oak-trees. The idea was immediately seized upon, the fashion adopted, and the dresses for a masquerade at Carlyle House which followed were whimsical and ridiculous to the highest degree. It must have been on this occasion that one has read of ladies appearing with whole branches of oak, roughly sawn off, and balanced on their powdered heads.

The same gift which stood Mrs. Taylor in such good stead in later life, that power of throwing herself into her surroundings, of appreciating and enjoying the gifts of others, marks her early experiences. She has a decided taste for human nature. There are so many different sorts of people, she says. Her artless enthusiasm for the lovely Miss Linley, who had been singing at Norwich, will not surprise any of those who have lately seen the enchanting portrait of the wife, mother, and grandmother of the Sheridans,—the saint, as Garrick called her a hundred years ago, and whom one might well be inclined to canonise now that the hundred years are past.

II.

Now and again our young traveller varies her correspondence with certain philosophical disquisitions upon the frivolous diversions in which she sees most women engaged; the idle amusements they so ardently desire furnish her with subjects of wonder and amazement. Life was meant for better

things, she says, and not least to render ourselves in all our capacities as serviceable as we possibly can. And this outward grace of good-will in the creed of the then inhabitants of Norfolk meant something very substantial, and was represented by many visible signs: kind offices, turkeys, Norfolk pippins, strings of sausages, long visits cordially welcomed from impecunious relatives, were all a part of it.

Perhaps, as these early letters flow on, the sympathetic Judith may have begun to surmise some events in prospect. There is an indefinable change in the style, there are allusions to the writer's happy lot, to a delightful succession of guests and surprises. Although Susanna declares that a certain serenity of mind is absolutely necessary to improvement, we hear of picnics, excursions, and riding parties. Her enthusiastic admiration of a moonlight night is productive of diversion to her friends, she says, who laugh at her raptures, while she rails at their want of taste. One cannot help seeing the picture, as she unconsciously sketches it in, the animated young horsewoman, the happy young company, that friend in particular who is laughing, coming along the moonlit lane. Surely it is an absorbing hour of life which has dawned for Miss Susanna; and before long moonlight, philosophy, serenity of mind—all are resolved into the important fact that Mr. John Taylor, the "excellent young man to whom she is so soon to be united," has appeared upon the scene! There is finally a demure, dignified, yet warm-hearted letter from the bride, Mrs. John Taylor, to her old friend Judith, who is also married by this time, and Judith no longer, but "my dear Mrs. Beecroft." Mrs. Taylor unconsciously throws the light of her own warm and happy hearth upon her exhortations to her friend.

"The constant desire," she says, "of a wife of giving pleasure to her husband, makes even trifling affairs of some importance; this affords that stimulus which is so needful to keep the active mind from weariness and lassitude. I

feel too much on your account, beloved friend, to salute you with the usual forms of congratulation," she concludes; "may as much happiness be yours as this life affords."

Mrs. Taylor herself and her husband only "wish to tread in the peaceful paths of life." Mr. Taylor was established in business at Norwich, and here he and his Susanna settled down in the year 1778 after a wedding tour to the North. They settle among their friends and their kinsfolk. In due time children begin to figure in the closely-written pages despatched to aunts and adjacent relatives, and with little John and little Richard follow the usual categories of a young mother's happy trials and anxious joys. Mr. Taylor's business also flourishes. They do not want for money, for their wishes are moderate enough to be fulfilled. While the children fill the little home and the cares increase, new friends gather round.

We have most of us at one time or another known the old Norse settlement, where the Danish fleets once landed before the sea rolled back, leaving the old city of Norwich high and dry upon its hill side, with its busy interests, its pleasant homes, its lively inhabitants, whose companionship seems to have been seasoned with a certain flavour of independent thought and a taste of Attic salt blown in from the neighbouring bays and shores and promontories; and, indeed, the life of a community within an hour's journey from the sea is one to which certain happy moods and sudden upliftings must necessarily belong. Within easy reach of Norwich stands Felbrigge, once the home of the Windhams, the "hillside-ridge," among the woods and avenues of oak, with its glorious sights of sky and sea beyond; there is also Cromer, between billows of down and broad reaches of silver sand; still nearer at hand is Earlham Hall, the birthplace of the Gurneys—that stately old house among lawns and spreading trees, where Wilberforce used to rest upon a pleasant bench

which is still pointed out; whither Elizabeth Fry returned from time to time, and where we sometimes hear of Mrs. Taylor spending a summer's afternoon. At Holkham, another neighbouring place, Mr. Coke (as an epigrammatic historian tells us) was then making poor land fertile, and in return for half a million so liberally spent was destined to be set upon some ten years later by the furious Norwich mob. Mrs. Taylor speaks of visiting at Holkham, and hopes "they may enjoy themselves notwithstanding the French."

She was already popular and much made of in her own little world, and also visited by friends from other circles. Mrs. Procter remembers her own step-father, Basil Montagu, speaking with regard and admiration of the quiet Norwich lady. Another name often occurs in her letters, that of one of the most brilliant and popular men of those brilliant times, Sir James Mackintosh, for whom Madame de Stael and Napoleon (for once agreeing) both expressed their admiration. Madame de Stael used to go so far as to say that Sir James was among Englishmen the most interesting man she had ever met. On one occasion when he and Madame de Stael alone outstayed a brilliant company at Bowood, Lord Lansdowne told Mrs. Kemble that in all his life he had never heard anything to approach the varied charm of the dialogue of these two distinguished people.

Sir James Mackintosh's feeling for Mrs. Taylor must have been of a different order from that which the brilliant Corinne inspired. How homely, how genuine, are his kind words to the quiet Norwich housewife! "I ought to be made permanently better by contemplating such a mind as yours," he writes; and he dwells affectionately upon her goodness, her fidelity in friendship, that "industrious benevolence which requires a vigorous understanding and a decisive character." "The assize week brought us Mr. Mackintosh and Basil Montagu," Mrs.

Taylor says in a letter to Dr. Reeve. "Mackintosh spent an evening with us alone. He was brilliant, instructive, sentimental—in fact, everything that the various powers of his mind would enable him to be."

In the little Norwich parlour, as in the Bowood drawing-room, one can imagine Mackintosh pouring out his delightful flood of talk, while Mrs. Taylor, like the princess in the fairy tale, sits listening, without time to intermit her labours, as she stitches at the shirts of the sleeping brothers upstairs.

III.

The Taylors belonged to the sturdy, sensible, stoical school which flourished in the beginning of the century, amid the alarms and catastrophes all round about; the great wars, the momentous struggles of Napoleon's ambition, the heavings of the French Revolution. This quiet English household was only in so far different from a hundred others that its mistress was a woman possessing more strength of mind, character, and perception than falls to the lot of many.

A friend who still remembers Mrs. Taylor has described her as follows: "I used to see Mrs. John Taylor at Mrs. Barbauld's, when I was a mere child, so that my recollections are only of her appearance and manner. She could never have been tall and handsome as her two daughters were; but she had fine dark grey eyes, and marked features. Her voice was deep-toned, her way of speaking decided and clear." Mrs. Taylor, we are told, cared little for appearances; her dress was apt to be unbecoming. It was Lucy Aiken who used to describe how she would go on darning her sons' grey worsted stockings while she was holding her own with Brougham, or Mackintosh, or Southey—flashing out epigrams at a room full of wits.

Mr. Reeve has sometimes described his grandmother in later days: actively ruling in her little kingdom, full of

care and hospitality and help for others, occupied with every household interest; although delicate in health, yet toiling daily up the hill to the great Norwich market, to cater for her family, followed by a maid carrying the brimming baskets. There is something which reminds one of Mrs. Carlyle in the raciness and originality of Susanna Taylor's mind, as well as in the keen interest she gives to all the details of her home, and to the necessities of the people she comes across. She is happier than Jane Carlyle in the good and happy children growing up around her, upon whom she can pour out all the warmth and energy of her affections.

Dr. Reeve seems to have been a sort of adopted son of the house long before his engagement to Susan the younger, and to have lived and grown up among all these young people, and to have been very near the mother's heart. He is sorely missed when the time comes for his departure from among them.

"I rather envy Mr. Frenshaw," writes Mrs. Taylor, "when I see him mending pens and poring over small print: my eyes are somewhat more bedimmed than usual, for they overflow now and then in spite of myself. Cowper says in his address to his mother's picture—

'Where thou art gone
Adieus and Farewells are a sound unknown.'

In this odd world they seem to be the most common of all words. To be sure, partings and meetings give variety to our existence; but I am now grown so dull as not to want variety. If I should wish for any, I must be contented to have it all second-hand. And so, when you have seen London and the Lakes and Edinburgh, all of which I know and have seen in former days, you may tell me what you think of them."

"Nothing at present suits my taste so well," (she says in another letter,) "as Susan's Latin lessons and her philosophical old master. . . . When we get to Cicero's discussions on the nature of the soul, or Virgil's fine descriptions, my mind is filled up. Life is either a dull round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or a spark of ethereal fire just kindled."

"Do not suppose I am beginning or ever will begin to preach to you. We know each other's opinions upon these topics, and we equally despise any shackles for the human mind but those which God and Nature impose upon us.

But if we endeavour to escape from these, we certainly subject ourselves to others infinitely more galling."

What a good friend she must have been for a young man at his start in life—what a good companion! Her letters are full of charming sense, of useful and pleasant suggestions, and as one quotes at random one feels that they contain a hundred things which ought still to be said to the young, still to be felt by the old.

On one occasion, after enumerating several remarkable people, she names a certain Mr. Wishaw.

"I would not have said so much about a person you know nothing of, but for the comfortable feeling that *people of the right sort are always to be found*, and also that they are sometimes happily thrown in our way; nothing tends more to enjoyment than to keep up a taste for their company whenever and wherever it can be had, instead of fancying that excellence is the exclusive production of past times or distant parts."

Is there not a whole philosophy of good sense in all this? Mrs. Taylor was no optimist like her friend Mrs. Opie; she had no exaggerated ideas of life and its possibilities; but she fully realised what was possible, and she held faithfully and gratefully to the blessings within her grasp. She continues very warmly attached to her young correspondent. "The very feelings which have produced such a friendship must perpetuate it," she says; and few people knew better than she did what it was to possess warm and enthusiastic friends.

So she writes on, discoursing, philosophising, throwing out the suggestions of her bright and practical mind as they occur to her, and we cannot do better than to go on quoting the passages as they occur. Here is one of her sensible sententious observations.

"There is no surer way of becoming acquainted with our own mind than by the effect produced upon it by the conduct of others; if we can tolerate vice and folly, we may grow fond of them in time. Perhaps," she continues, "you can bear witness to the truth of another remark, that people generally wrap themselves up in a solemn kind of reserve, and particularly those who have taken

upon themselves the task of enlightening the world. It is to be accounted for from the jealousy and fear of losing a reputation once acquired, by the unguarded frankness of colloquial intercourse. Be it ours, my dear friend, merrily to philosophise, sweetly to play the fool. Strange counsel to a young man in a grave university."

Through all the tumult of the early years of the century the Taylors' home pursues its steady life. The elder boys grow up and go out into the world; little Sally, the pet of the family, who is to translate Ranke in after life, is beginning to write in round-hand; Susan is still Mr. Frenshaw's pupil; of herself Mrs. Taylor writes:

"For my part I never valued life more than I do at present, yet I think it would be a relief to me to feel as if I could be spared; but perhaps in this I deceive myself, and one of the charms of the world may be that I am still wanted in it. It is a pleasant world after all, and for your comfort, my dear friend, let me tell you that it is not only pleasant at that delicious season which we may denominate the morning of our existence,—there is a chastened, a temperate kind of happiness, which is perhaps to the full as desirable as the more glowing sensations of our early days."

She is greatly interested in the *Edinburgh Review*, then in its earliest numbers. It was first published in 1802; Jeffrey, Brougham, and Sydney Smith were its founders, clothing the new-born potentate in the Whig colours, blue and yellow. Doctor Reeve, who had then only just taken his degree at Edinburgh, contributed some articles to the first numbers. Reviews have their own life and growth. This one toned down with time; but in its early days it was somewhat over vigorous and unsparing in its measure. Mrs. Taylor has been reading a review of the 'Life of Cowper,' and the busy lady, dispensing her loaves and fishes, still finds time to review the reviewer, and to add her own excellent comment to the text. She says:

"Mr. Hayley's style wants that majestic simplicity with which such a character as Cowper's should have been portrayed. He thinks it necessary too, as Mr. Jeffrey observes, to praise everybody. This is so like the

misses who call all their insipid acquaintance 'sweet,' and 'interesting,' that it makes me rather sick. A biographer is good for nothing who does not give those touches, those lights and shadows which identify his characters ;—on this account I do not like a remark of the reviewer that Mrs. Unwin's little jealousies of Lady Austen might as well have been passed over in silence. If the weaknesses of excellent people are to be concealed, how shall we form an accurate impression of human nature ?"

It would certainly be difficult to tell one person from another. Again she says :

"Nothing can operate more powerfully against the attainment of excellences in every species of composition, than the indiscriminate praise, and false tenderness, which prevent those writers who are capable of higher degrees of improvement from endeavouring sedulously to aim at greater perfection, or which lead those who are incapable to trouble the public at all. I have been witness to such extravagant praises bestowed upon inferior compositions, especially in London, that I rejoice in the more hardly criticism of our northern metropolis, not from a desire to depreciate, but from a conviction that, the more completely both books and characters find their proper stations, the better it will be for society. I think the 'E. R.' contains just but not ill-natured criticism.

"If I were inclined to make an appeal for any person who has fallen under the lash, it would be for Robert Southey, whose experiments in poetry I acknowledge to be many of them fantastic and extravagant, but they are the experiments of a man of genius. . . I think we ought to be thankful to literary pioneers. . . After all that can be said as an apology for the new school of poets, they (themselves) must find the exact boundary between simplicity and childish puerility."

IV.

One important element of daily life in England all this time must not be overlooked, and that was, the prevailing fear of a French invasion which constantly haunted people's minds. Sir George Napier, in his *Memoirs*, tells us that he heard from Soult himself that the project was in fact strongly in the Emperor's mind. England was not unprepared, and Norfolk was ready to play her part. Mrs. Taylor describes the start of the Norwich volunteers :

"I begin to think people may make a joke of anything if they try ; but I was never less

disposed to be merry than this morning when in the midst of pouring rain our volunteers with three cheers bade farewell to their native city ; Mr. Houghton, the clergyman, gave a breakfast on the occasion by candle-light. Dear little Mary looked on with wondering eyes at her old friends transformed into soldiers. If the French land in Norfolk, I shall expect prodigies of valour from you. What do you think of Richard in his scarlet uniform ? Of all things this is the last sight I should have dreamed of seeing."

The French never landed in Norfolk, but an event which Mrs. Taylor contemplates with far less equanimity is beginning to foreshadow its coming. Mr. Frenshaw's pupil is still following her Greek lessons and sewing her seams, but she is also growing up day by day and hour by hour as maidens of fifteen are apt to do, and her mother (as is the way of mothers) is among the last to realise this fact. Little Susan who leaves her dressing things behind her, who has to be reminded to tie up parcels securely, who but yesterday was a baby,—is it possible that already a woman's life and cares are awaiting her, and that the young doctor is thinking of her as a help-mate and companion for life ! The extraordinary fact seems to have taken Mrs. Taylor quite by surprise. Mothers and daughters of our own time are in a different attitude from the affectionate but Minerva-like terms on which they were content to remain in the days of which we are writing. I have heard it lately said with truth, that the difference of feeling now existing between parents and children, far exceeds the natural divergence of a single generation. A whole revolution of opinion and impulse has come about within the last twenty years, dividing even young mothers from their growing daughters. It must require some generosity and intellect in a parent to discriminate between what is harmless in itself, though it may absolutely jar against her own instincts and prejudices, and that which borders upon the common and the reckless, to use no harsher words. Mothers and daughters in

those days were upon terms which we can scarcely realise now. There was a decorum, a deliberation, a stiffness in their intercourse which could perhaps better be carried out before posts, telegrams, daily papers, had multiplied occupation, familiarity, and consequent haste. It was Mrs. Taylor's belief, for instance, that during her girls' absence from home "their moral improvement would keep pace with their intellectual, thanks to the observations and discussions they would receive by letter." All these grand words mean nothing more, after all, than that the mother is ever thinking, hoping, planning for her children's well-doing and safety.

Susan is, however, to know nothing of Dr. Reeve's ardent feelings; not one word is to reveal to her the romance of which the web is silently weaving about her. She is only sixteen; she is to go on with her lessons, to see something of the world, to "practise housekeeping and the culinary arts, that she may not from mere inexperience make mistakes which her husband would not like;" but no glimpse of his real feeling is to be allowed to her. One feels sorry for the poor lover, and yet how wise is the mother's appeal to him not yet to disturb her young daughter's serene and innocent mind!

"Prove," she says, "that you can, as you said to me, command your feelings. The way to allow mind and body to come to perfection is to suffer them to ripen by degrees."

"If you knew what harm it would do to substitute constrained manners for innocent frankness, and to carry forward Susan's attention to distant objects, instead of bestowing the whole force of her mind upon present subjects."

And then comes a little relenting sympathy.

"When either you or I am inclined to torment ourselves with fruitless wishes, let us have the comfort of thinking there is always one person we can sit down and open our hearts to."

The anxious mother writes page after page to her would-be son-in-law, half-solding, half-soothing. Why does he

want to settle in London? Why is he not satisfied with Norwich and Norwich life?

"Dr. Alderson," she says, "after reading me those letters of Mrs. Opie's which completely prove that the whole fraternity of authors, artists, lecturers, and public people get such an insatiable appetite for praise, that nothing but the greatest adulation can prevent their being miserable, came to this sentence: 'Dr. Reeve, like a sensible man, prefers London to Norwich.' 'Is that a proof of sense,' said I, 'to reject what you allow is an extraordinary chance of settling to advantage in a place, because it contains but 40,000 inhabitants?'"

Meanwhile, in 1805, Mrs. Taylor gives an account of another talk with Dr. Alderson: "'What a pity it is that Dr. Reeve should not settle here,' says Dr. Alderson, 'when there is so fine an opening and nobody to fill up the vacancy at the hospital; but *London*, I suppose.' . . . 'Yes,' said I, 'he has contracted something of the disease which people acquire by living there—a sort of feeling that no other place is fit to live in.'" To which the kind old doctor replies by reminding Mrs. Taylor that he, himself, will be dead before very long, and that this is an additional reason for Dr. Reeve's return to Norwich. And very soon, and with very good reason, Dr. Reeve seems to have made up his mind, and to have given up all thought of settling away from Norwich, and, premature though it may have appeared to the poor anxious mother, he seems to have disclosed his feelings to his future wife.

Then Susan goes to London to visit Mrs. Barbauld, and improve her mind, and the engagement is formally announced. Her mother is glad she reads poetry with Mrs. Barbauld, and delighted she has been to the play. Here comes a gentle motherly rebuke:

"It would have been better if Reeve had not accompanied you to Stoke Newington; we must not only mind our P's and Q's, but our R's." You know how freely I like to talk to you about everything. Do not show a kind of weakness, which in the end never fails to lower a woman, even in the estimation

of a lover! Men may be gratified first by possessing unbounded influence over the mind of a woman, but they generally despise her for it in the end. One of the great evils in contracting engagements of this sort at such an early age as yours is the full disclosure of affections owing to the innocent simplicity of youth, which a woman at a more advanced period, from a due sense of propriety, would certainly in some measure have concealed. For the future show Reeve that you, like him, can bear absence when absence is necessary, and that the only way to be fit for the duties of life hereafter is to perform them with the utmost zeal and alacrity now."

How admirable is all this, how Spartan, how sensible,—and how difficult to carry out! And then comes a touching little bit of sentiment upon Mrs. Taylor's own account:

"Your father has just reminded me that to-morrow is my birthday. What a difference between the beginning of life and the close; solicitude on one's own account seems quite extinguished as far as relates to this world, not so for one's children. Towards them it will remain to the last moment; but I will endeavour to make it useful without being troublesome to you."

Other admonitions follow, warnings against want of attention to respectful demeanour such as is never to be observed in well-bred girls; and then, very motherlike, at the end of the letter,

"Now I have written this letter, I have a great mind to burn it, I am so unwilling to give you a moment's pain, but if you take it as a proof of love, and determine to profit by it, it will rather give you pleasure.

"When you are absent it is a great effort to think of faults. I could rather sit down and cry for your company."

One letter winds up with a quotation from one of the lover's epistles. He complains that he has heard nothing for several weeks. And here it is not possible to sympathise as much as usual when the mother points out to the daughter that she should not encourage her lover to expect to hear more often than is convenient.

Mrs. Taylor, as other mothers have been and will be again, is still perturbed by her son-in-law's impatience, by his ineradicable conviction that two people can live at the same ex-

pense as one. Little by little, however, difficulties are removed. Mr. Reeve's father promises him a good allowance; all is made smooth for the young couple's future, and at last they are married in the autumn of 1807. A house belonging to the Kerrison family had been taken in Surrey Street. We hear of many details: linen and boilers, and pails, and brushes, and scouring-cloths; a faithful Mary is engaged, who falls ill from over-scrubbing and has to be nursed. The good mother is there ready to see to everything, to nurse, to shop, to order. She writes full and detailed accounts of everything that is in preparation for the home. "Don't you wonder we can be interested in anything," she says, "while these rivers of blood are flowing on the Continent, only to complete the triumph of a tyrant, and to rivet the chains of poor, subjugated, unhappy Europe? But nevertheless, whatever is going on round about, people happily go on being interested in their own lives, and in those belonging to them."

Perhaps the most charming letter in the whole collection is one from Mrs. Taylor to her husband, towards the end of their peaceful married life, in which, in that still steady and exquisitely finished handwriting, she treats of "the only subject of deep interest to either of them," and recapitulates the family history. There is something almost biblical in the calm outlook, in the benediction at the end of this long and loving life. "As the father and mother of seven children, we have reason to be thankful that they are what they are, and to hope that their descendants may do them as much credit, and give them as much comfort . . . that John and his wife are living in a handsome, commodious house in a polite and pleasant neighbourhood is a gratifying circumstance as far as health is concerned." Mrs. Taylor is only afraid that *their* children may not sufficiently remember that this style of living is entirely dependent upon the father's life and exertions. She next comes to

her beloved Richard, "with all his valuable acquirements, his genuine humility, disinterested kindness, undeviating integrity." How wise is the manner of her wish to help him! "I know no other way to make ourselves tolerably easy about this dear clever child of ours, than to let him be the arbiter of his own destiny." She feels, she writes, "that each one of them should attain to that measure of independence which it is in the parents' power to bestow, at whatever cost to themselves." Then of another of her sons, "It would embitter my latter days if I thought that there was anything standing against Edward which would distress him, or that he should owe to the favour of his brethren what he is really entitled to from you; . . . it is sometimes as much a parent's duty to deviate from the equal distribution of property as it is in general to adhere to it. What I have to give goes to Sally and Deborah, because they want it more than my other daughters." The whole letter breathes a spirit of wisdom and good sense and tender justice, and is, indeed, a model of impartiality and unselfish good judgment. The mother is ill and alone at Norwich; but she forbids the father to mention this to the son with whom he is staying. "You know how well I can bear being alone if I have but books, which I am sure never to want." It is in this same letter that Mrs. Taylor speaks of occasional talks with her "eccentric lodger" John Stuart Mill.

As time goes on Susanna Taylor among other gifts cultivates that most precious art, *L'Art d'être Grandmère*. For her child's child her warm heart seems to thaw the formalities of her

time and age. It is touching to hear of the faithful remembrances of long-ago games at coach-and-horses, in which grandmamma is the horse, and "darling," as she calls her little grandson, is the coachman. "But I shall have no room for love to Darling Boy," she writes somewhere; "he must have almost lost the idea of Norwich-grandmamma." The grandchild occupies her mind, and delights her heart; how proud she is of his cleverness and bright intellect; she tries to excuse her weakness on utilitarian principles, and frames a scheme in which the grandparents are to spoil in exact proportion to the parents' inflexibility.

Sally, the younger daughter, is also the mother of a little daughter, much beloved by "mamama," as she calls Mrs. Taylor. The present writer has still before her as she writes the image of Lucy, Lady Duff Gordon, that noble Spanish-looking lady of whom as Sally's baby there are such pretty details. "I understand all her language;—the rubbish drawer is her delight," says Mrs. Taylor, and then she adds, "It is time she left me, for I am growing to be too fond of Sally's child."

My story is slender enough. The figures come and go. That of the young doctor disappears far too early from the peaceful scene—for peaceful it is amid the storms and catastrophes of that time, when the selfish ambitions of the ambitious could only be atoned for by the steady moderation and unselfish wisdom of the honourable unknown.

Susanna Taylor died in 1823. Her daughter, Mrs. Reeve, was with her to the last.

ANNE RITCHIE.

LIFE IN THE ALLEGHANY MOUNTAINS.

WE thought we had found Arcadia when we established our domicile among the mountains of North Carolina. A balmy air, a delightful climate, and scenery rarely equalled for picturesque beauty, would seem to give to this Alleghany region all the attractions one could reasonably look for in a home. True, it is remote from the centres of thought, and without libraries and galleries of art; but did not Solomon some ages ago say that much thought is "a weariness to the flesh," and does not constant contact with art and artificiality make us long the more for the unpainted adorning and simple naturalness of Nature?

Our home was much like those old mansions which are still occasionally seen in the rural districts of New England. The house was spacious and picturesque, with large rooms, wide halls, and broad verandahs; and about its generous deep-breasted fire-places and antique oak and walnut mantels was an air of comfort and repose not to be found among the tinsel decorations of a modern city home. It was approached by a winding avenue of trees, and embowered amid groups of oak and poplar, which had stood there for more than a century. Dense masses of these woods, intermixed with pines and chestnuts, stood at the rear of the mansion, and smaller groups were scattered over a broad lawn, which, sloping gently down into a wide meadow, skirted the bank of a quiet stream, so placid and yet so picturesque that it had received from the Indians the name of the Beautiful River. Between the house and the high road lay a deep and shady ravine; and through it trickled a small rivulet, fed by two ice-cold springs, about which were ranged rustic benches, roofed by wide-branching trees—a

delightful retreat from the heats of midsummer. This was our home, and around us rose the mountains, of every variety of outline, and every hue of grey and blue—in domes and peaks and pinnacles, piercing the clouds, and towering aloft a mile and more above the level of the sea.

The earth was clad in all the glory of leaf and blossom when we took possession of this mountain home; and I well remember the first evening that we sat under the vine-shaded verandah and watched the sun go down beyond the distant heights, gilding the clouds and the mountains with burnished gold. The air was laden with the sweet breath of the honeysuckle and the climbing rose, and it fanned our faces with a delicious coolness that seemed wafted from some earthly Elysium. Surely, we said to ourselves, in this peaceful locality we shall find

"Retirement, quiet,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving heaven."

But alas! Satan entered into Paradise, and, according to the negro legend, there followed in his rear a grand army of gnats and mosquitoes, which, when the Lord had cast out our first parents and the Old Adversary, remained behind—" 'case dey wus so nimble and so small, de Lord, He wusn't spry 'nuff to kotch 'em." And so, the Satan of slavery had been expelled from this southern Eden, but had left behind a swarm of human gnats—"low-down whites," and "no-account blacks," the legitimate progeny of the Great Evil—to remind us that man has fallen, and that an earthly Paradise is a pure chimera. However, this knowledge was the result of subsequent experience. Now, we fully believed that life here would be one round of rational enjoyment, and that

we had only to hold out our hands to catch the roasted larks which would rain upon our platters. But it was not long before we began to learn that this world is one of tribulation.

Our house needed some repairs, and an old negro-cabin—a relic of slavery, and the only unsightly thing about the grounds—had to be remodelled into a cottage for the gardener, who, blessed with a wife and a baker's dozen of woolly-headed picaninnies, needed a domicile of his own. To do this work I employed a small army of mechanics; but they went about their tasks in so leisurely a way that I soon discovered that my repairs (though the wages were but a dollar a day) were costing about four-fold what similar work would cost at the North. Therefore I discharged the entire gang, and determined I would do what else had to be done by contract.

The work on the negro-shanty was the most pressing, and forthwith I bargained with a master carpenter, (said to be "entirely responsible,") for its reconstruction at a specified price and by a certain time. He sent a solitary workman, who, in the course of ten days, removed the roof and weather-boarding of the ugly edifice, leaving exposed its dingy beams and rafters begrimed with the dust and smoke of nearly a century. This great work was finished on a Saturday. About dark the master-builder came to me, saying that his other patrons had disappointed him, that his workmen must be paid, and, though he was to receive nothing till his work was done, it would be a great favour if I would help him out of his difficulty.

He was a "responsible man," and I a verdant one; and the consequence was that I advanced him about twice what his work was worth, and—saw no more of him during our sojourn in the Alleghanies.

Then for six long weeks the unsightly frame stood there in naked ugliness, an affliction to the eye, and

of no possible use except to scare away the crows from the neighbouring corn-field. The master-builder was coming every day, but his day never came. A home, moreover, had to be prepared for the gardener, who now lived half a mile away, and came to his work each day a little later than the preceding on the plea of the distance he had to travel. At last, when his morning advent had lengthened out to noon, and his working hours had shortened to four or five, I determined to employ another builder.

This time I contracted, not with a "responsible" master-mechanic, but with a journeyman carpenter—"not worth a dime, sir, but sober, honest, and 'dustrious, and jest the smartest workman in five counties." And so he proved to be; and in a reasonably short time the roof was halfway on, and one gable weather-boarded. Then, in my absence, he came to the mistress of my household with a pitiful tale of a child sick nigh unto death, and no money in his pocket to buy medicines. The lady is afflicted with human sympathies, and, though she knew the man was to receive nothing till his work was done, she did, out of pity for his sick child, pay him about twice as much as what he had done would amount to.

His child must have been long sick, for we saw no more of him for a fortnight, when one day I encountered him measuring with unsteady strides the village highway. Then I put the amount paid him with the sum I had on permanent deposit with the master-builder, and resolved in my wrath to make an end once for all of the unsightly relic of slavery.

I have omitted to mention that I had bought the house in January (some months before we intended to take possession) and had employed John, who was recommended as a superior gardener, to put the grounds in order, and plant such vegetables as we should need during the season. I was surprised to find, when we came in July, that three-fourths of a two-acre garden

had been planted in cabbages, and I hinted as much to the coloured agriculturist. "Not a cabbage too many, boss," he replied. "Ye'll find it'm so fore de season am ober."

And so I did. The vegetables grew gloriously; but just as, day by day, they opened their great green leaves, they would suddenly disappear, leaving not a trace behind, except the print of a wide No. 11 brogan. A like fate overtook the beets, the parsnips, the squash, and the cucumbers, and when I alluded to the catastrophe John would invariably say, "It am de 'possums, boss; dey'm mighty fond ob garden truck; an' dey'm great tiefs."

At last, when all the grapes had disappeared over night from a choice vine, and nothing was left to account for them but the aforesaid foot-print, which tallied with that of John to a nicety, I said to him. "John, I prefer to have no 'possums on the premises who wear brogans so large as No. 11."

So John left, and there being no longer any pressing need of a gardener's house, the old shanty went down, and was consumed in firewood, which I reasonably supposed would be the last of it. But it was not. In about a fortnight after its demolition the journeyman carpenter presented himself, proposing to go on with his contract. I pointed to the sod which covered the spot where it had stood, and offered him a receipt in full for all damages. But this was not satisfactory. He sued me for the work he had not done, demanding the full amount of the contract. I was my own lawyer, and had a fool for a client. I lost the case.

Being now rid of the gardener and the gardener's cottage, and having no vegetables left for the opossums to steal, we hoped to settle down to a life free from domestic annoyances. Of servants we had still a stableman, who took reasonably good care of our animals; a cook, tolerably well acquainted with her profession; an upstairs maid, who left no dust about,

except in corners; and a young imp of darkness who attended upon the others, and went daily to the mail which brought the Northern journals, and was now our only connecting link with modern civilisation. In addition a laundress came two days in the week, and "did" the household linen.

A Northern housekeeper will deem this corps of domestics numerous enough to look after two adults requiring but little attention, and a "farm" of twenty acres, nearly all lawn and primitive forest. But the Southern blacks practise upon the principle of "the division of labour." None of them can, or will, do more than one thing; so I was soon obliged to supplement the stableman by another John, who should do the general out-door work. The acquaintance of this lazy genius I made through Lyddy, the cook, a staid matron of about fifty, well known in the neighbourhood.

John was about thirty years old, and of pure African lineage. He had a stalwart frame, a foot large enough for an elephant, and arms and hands that might have wielded the weaver's beam of Goliath of Gath. His skin was as black as ebony, and had the unctuous brilliancy that is peculiar to the negro "blood-royal"; but his features were regular and of clear European type, which contrasted oddly with the sable hue of his complexion. He had a mouth of uncommon width, filled with two rows of the finest ivory. When not open in an habitual grin, it was distended in a sort of chuckling laugh, which rippled over his face and huge frame in a way that was pleasant to look upon. He had what the blacks call "edication"—that is, he could read, write, and do small sums in arithmetic; but such words as "forethought," "care," or "anxiety" were not in the spelling-book he had studied. With no more thought of the present or the future than an animal, he yet had such a capacity for fun, such a sense of the ludicrous, and such an

ear for melody, as justify my styling him a genius.

With constant supervision John did his daily duties tolerably well; but it was when the day's work was over, and the servants had gathered together in the kitchen for the evening, that his services became of especial value. Then by a droll story, or some strains of improvised but genuine melody from his banjo or violin, he brought the discords of the day into harmony, and no doubt contributed to the longevity of the household. He was allowed the use of the daily newspaper when it had been read in the library, and often his mistress and I would steal of an evening into a dark corner of the dining-room, where, with the door ajar, we could listen unperceived to the "news," as John dispensed it to his sable auditory in the kitchen. This "news" was not generally according to the 'New York Times,' from which he professed to read; but his audience were none the worse, nor the wiser, for the discrepancy. The absurdity of the variations was what made the drollery of the thing.

A report of one of these gatherings will show the character of them all, and cast some light upon the composition of our household. John had read of a whole fleet sunk in mid-ocean, and of an entire country swallowed up by an earthquake, when he told of a woman tried for bigamy, who had been wedded to seven husbands, all of whom, with seventeen children, were in court waiting for the decision of the jury.

"Seventeen children!" echoed Uncle Steve, the stableman. "Why, dat am nuffin. I neber had nary more'n two wives, and I'se had twenty-two."

"Dat'm so, Uncle Steve," rejoined John, "an' ob all cullers, from a dirty white ter coal brack."

"Dat's true," said Stephen, "an' dey'm all smart an' likely loike, 'cep de light cullud; 'pears dey all wus sort of no 'count."

"'Cep little Zip, uncle, what shines de boss's boots. I'se yered him say dat Zip was born ter de profession, an' wurth all de oder darkies on de place. As for you, Uncle Steve, de boss know you can't tell a boss from a mule."

"Gwo 'way, you John; de boss doan't know nuffin ob de sort. He'm a Norderman, an' all dey 'spects to git more out of cullud folks dan am in 'em; but he sots a heap on Uncle Steve—he know he hain't no bigamous nigger."

"But yer Emily Jane am. See what you've brung her up to, Uncle Steve—free husbands, an' ebery one ob 'em libin'!"

"Well, I 'clare ter gracious," now chimed in Ida, the yellow up-stairs servitor, "that isn't 'spectable."

"'Spectable!" echoed John. "You talk of 'spectable, what habs free fellers you own self, all on de hooks togeddar. I jest tought I'd a died de oder Sunday when dey all come to onst—two a foot to de back door, an' tudder in a kerridge, to de front, whar he ringed de bell like as if he wus somebody. But lor! how he did wilt when de missus up an' tole him dat darkies mus' keep dar place, and his place was on de wes' side of de house. Leff him try dat on ag'in, an' you'll walk, Miss Ida—dat's sartin."

"Well," said Miss Ida, with, as we could easily imagine, a high toss of the head, "if I walks, I'll go in a kerridge, as I done dat Sunday."

"Yas," now said Lyddy, "an' hab a white driber, as you done den. But, Miss Ida, you goed 'way in a kerridge, an' you comed back afoot—an' dat am what all de proud 'uns 'll come to. I'se yered it read so out ob de book."

"Dat's so, Miss Lyddy," rejoined John. "I'se read it so myself—dar hain't much in dat book as I hain't read. But tain't much to be driv by such white trash. An' I reckon de boss am a fin'in' ob 'em out, dough he tole me de oder day—dat time he kotch me asleep in de hay mow—dat he wus a gwine to cut all us

darkies adriff, an' hab nary one but white folks. Reckon he'll hab a good time doin' it! 'Spec he'll begin wid de red-headed fellar as brung de missus chickens wid de shells sca'ce off dar backs."

"Or dat oder one," said Stephen, "as brung de blin' hoss nigh dead wid ole age, an' de heabes, an' swore he wus only six year de comin' spring; or de oder dat leff ter sell de hoss sick wid the lungs, when de boss wus away, an' missus an' me had to nuss him day and night ter keep de breff ob life in his body. An' dat ar white man had de imperance when he comed for de animal ter ax, 'How'm dat hoss?' like as if he tought he was dead. I 'spec he war sartin he was, and he meant ter make de boss pay fur de critter."

"Or dat oder ole fellar," resumed John, "dat de boss wus so tooken wid—him as brung de wood wid de ox an' de mule hitched up wid a rope harness, tied togedder wid red flannel and bits of de ole 'ooman's garters. De boss he walk round an' round dat team, an' he say dat dough it wasn't 'zactly 'cordin' to scriptur, it wus wuth gwine a long way to see; an' he ax' dat ole feller to come agin, 'case he b'lieved in patronizin' 'mestic industry."

And here John broke into one of his low ripples of laughter, at the expense of "de boss," who was overhearing him from the next apartment.

"But he bought de wood," now said Lyddy; "an' Lor', how he done storm when I tole him dat all but de top ob de pile wus pine saplin', jess cut, an' as wudn't burn fur no 'sideration. Day say dat ole man lead prayers in de meetin'. I wonder if he eber tink when he'm on his knees, of de spittin' wood dat he made de boss come nigh ter swarin' ober?"

"Well," said John, "de boss am a fin'in' 'em out, an' I reckon we won't hab to trabil. But, 'ludin' to trablin', leff me read you 'bout de great walkin' match dey hab up to New York,

whar one cullud man beat de crowd—trabilled 560 mile in a day."

Then John proceeded to read from the Times about the great match in Madison Square, exaggerating the account in a most amusing and amazing manner, and supplementing the whole by professing to read from a sermon of the Rev. George Washington, the illustrious coloured preacher of the North, wherein he strongly denounced the folly of such practices, and adduced Enoch as the greatest walker of all times. "But, my hearers, with all ole man Enoch's grit, and pluck, and persavarance, what comed ob him? What comed ob him? Why, arter walkin' fur free hundred year in fa'r heel an' toe fashion—none ob yer hipple-drum business, like dese yere—walkin' wid de Lord free hundred year, he got tuck, de Lord tuck him. Ole Massa was too long in de stride, and too sound in de wind for him, and so ole boss Enoch got tuck, And leff dat be a warnin' to all ob you to leff alone dis walkin' business."

Amid the wonderment which followed, we heard Lyddy exclaim, "Oh, Mr. Cobble! what a edication you hab—it'm written on yous bery brow."

This was the social life that gathered under our roof, and I think we shall be pardoned for indulging in it in so surreptitious a manner, if I state that it was the best the neighbourhood afforded. Of people professing any kind of cultivation there were but three within a radius of five miles. One of these was a high-pressure philanthropist, whom I had known at the North as a decided sham; another was an ex-confederate, who had not given up his prejudices when he surrendered his sword; and the third was a retired gentleman who saw the most sunshiny day through the medium of a diseased stomach, and was, therefore, not the most cheerful of companions. The remainder of our social horizon was bounded by a dense mist of poor whites, and a denser cloud of blacks, whom, like the mists and clouds in nature, we preferred to

observe and wonder at from a reasonable distance. Our society, therefore, we had to find in nature, in books, and in ourselves; and when tired of such companionship we sought recreation in a study of the nondescript humanity that came under our observation.

The general characteristics of these people I have elsewhere delineated, and a repulsive picture is not improved by frequent exhibition. Rather than dwell too much upon defects, a kindly critic prefers to search for unobtrusive beauties that escape the general eye, and which may redeem an otherwise wretched production. These beauties I found everywhere among the blacks, and even among the "poor whites," who are physically, mentally, and morally, a "bad job." I encountered, here and there, an isolated specimen which showed that, planted in another soil, and given the ideals on which true manhood is fashioned, they might yet be raised above their present grovelling condition, and made valuable citizens of the Republic. Some of these "rough diamonds" are worth a few words of description; but, to preserve a proper connection in my narrative, I must now relate a catastrophe which led to a sudden dismemberment of our coloured family.

It was not long after we had discovered, from the admiring exclamation of Lyddy, that education was written on the very brow of Mr. Cobble, when that lady suddenly presented herself before us one evening, as we were seated together in the library. She was smiling and smirking, and evidently labouring under some violent internal commotion. Her usually quiet eye was lit up by an unwonted gleam; her demure face was irradiated with a kind of oily glow, and her skinny fingers were playing nervously with the two corners of her apron. Sidling up to her mistress, she said in an uncertain tone, that was half speech and half giggle, "Missus, I'se gwine to be married."

"Married!" we both exclaimed, the mistress dropping her sewing, and I looking up from my book, straight at the decayed Venus, already a grandmother.

"Yas, missus," she said with a slight curtsy, and still fondling the corners of her apron. "Yous know dat I'se a widdy, and John's a widdy too—we'se both widdys—so, we'se 'cluded to git married."

"Why, Lyddy," said her mistress. "Will you marry that good-for-nothing John?"

"Yas, missus," answered Lyddy, misunderstanding the question. "He am good—he's got religion, an' he's got edication—reads a heap ob books—reads 'em to me."

"And do you expect those quarters to go up again?" I asked, as a vision of that confounded shanty rose before me in all its ghastly ugliness.

"No, sar; we doan't 'spec' dat. I'se comed to gib de missus warnin'. John wants to gwo off on de kears, an' he wants me to gwo, an' I'se neber rid on de kears."

The tone of anticipated delight in which this was uttered made me smile at the simplicity of the woman, and I said to her mistress,—"It's January and June—Christmas and the fourth of July coming together."

"Yas, sar," said Lyddy. "We'se to git married Chris'mus. John's got de licence. I lent him de fifty cents."

"And you'll lend him a good many more, if you marry him."

"I means to, sar. I'se sabel up quite a heap; an' John mean to put it inter hosses an' a dray; an' I take in boarders, down ter Chatt'nooga. He say it'm a right smart place."

"Well, it is; but what does your son say to all this?"

"He doan't want me to gwo 'way, sar; but he say I must shute myself. You see, sar, he'm a wife an' chillen, an' de book say dey'm 'fore fader or moder."

"I know; but how do you feel to leave him?"

"If I knows him well, an' doin' well, dat'll be 'nuff fur me. Yous know, sar, I'se a gittin old, an' I'se lonesome like; an' John habedication, an' he kin read to me, an' so de time won't pass quite so heaby."

"Well, Lyddy," said her mistress, "it is your affair, and not ours. We hope it will turn out well; but if it should not, you can come back to your home here—you will be welcome."

The tears came into the woman's eyes as she said, "Bress you, missus," and left the apartment.

On Christmas Day they were married in the negro church, and on the following day took the "kears" for Chattanooga. Our forebodings were not realised. They prospered in a worldly way, he as a drayman, she as mistress of a small hostel, whose sign gave warning to all comers that no ardent spirits were sold on the premises.

It was now midwinter, and, there being but little to do about the grounds, we could dispense with a successor to Mr. Cobble until the ensuing spring. But it was not so with a substitute for Lyddy. Eating being a physical necessity not admitting of postponement, we were obliged to look about at once for a competent person to officiate in our kitchen. Matrimony is to be encouraged on sound considerations of political economy; but it was the thing which, more than all else, interfered with our domestic comfort during our sojourn in the southern country. Cook after cook, gardener after gardener, stableman after stableman, had no sooner got well into our ways before they had honoured us with an invitation—usually printed on a card about six inches square—to a wedding ceremony. The mature age of Lyddy would, we had fondly thought, protect her from the allurements of any black Adonis. But we had not counted on the attractions of "edication" to the untutored intellect, nor imagined the yearnings of lonesome age for the cheerful companionship of youth—especially when

that youth was a "shining light," like John, and able to quote scripture by the yard. Some one has said, "We learn wisdom from experience;" and so, pondering this subject on the eve of the exodus of Lyddy, I startled the mistress by proposing that she should instal Emily Jane, the much-married daughter of Uncle Steve, as overseer of our culinary department.

"What!" she exclaimed, "that spitfire! The wife of three living husbands!"

"That is her especial recommendation—even the customs of North Carolina won't allow her a fourth; so we shall be safe from her contracting matrimony."

Emily Jane was sent for. She was a handsome creature—tawny, but beautiful, erect as a flag-staff, supple as an eel, graceful as a leopard, and, in her apparel, gorgeous as an army with banners. Her straight raven hair was as glossy as silk, and her eyes were blazing coals, lit from some volcano within her. She was embodied restlessness, ever on the move, and taking no account of even five-barred impediments. I have known her to vault upon the back of a spirited sixteen-hand horse, and race him, without saddle or bridle, over the grounds in total disregard of fences and such-like obstructions. She was the very poetry of motion; but she slung things about the kitchen in a very unpoetical fashion. In less than a week it was what Uncle Steve called "de bery debil's workshop."

Going into that apartment one day soon after her advent, the lady of the house heard Emily Jane muttering to herself—"How can I be 'spected to cook, with no pots to cook with?"

"No pots?" said the mistress. "How is that, Emily Jane?"

And then the pantries and cupboards were ransacked, and a surprising leanness was discovered in the stock of crockery and kitchen utensils. Enough had disappeared to supply several small families. In reply to the wonderment of the mistress, Emily Jane

remarked: "Don't know for sartin, missus, but Lyddy say you gabe her heaps o' things to sot her up to Chatt'nooga. Reckon she had nigh on to a kear load—'nuff to furnish a big boarding-saloon."

And this was the demure lover of "Scriptur" and black "edication," whom we had mourned as a lost treasure—a black diamond, very cheap at twelve dollars a month!

But the superabundant energy of Emily Jane threatened to be scarcely less destructive to our stock of kitchen ware than the thievish propensities of her pious predecessor. Scarcely a day passed but she came to her mistress with a rueful face, and a broken utensil. "Dar, missus!" she would say, "it'm done broke, and I'se all tore up." We, therefore, counted upon a quieter time among the crockery and ironware when we observed that Emily Jane was becoming serious-minded, and regularly attending a neighbouring meeting-house. If she would only experience a change of heart she might adopt sedate ways, and save us the necessity of entirely refurnishing the kitchen.

And the prospect for this was soon quite encouraging. One morning, after a long night at the "revival," she accosted her mistress with a sad countenance, saying, as she pressed her two hands upon her bosom, "I feels bery sickly like round yere, missus; don't dat show I'se gittin religion?" It was, no doubt, a premonitory symptom, for that evening, hearing a great hubbub in the kitchen, I looked into it, and there, amid a throng of sable brothers and sisters, sat Emily Jane, with upturned eyes, streaming hair, and arms revolving like a wind-mill. At sight of me the tumult suddenly ceased, and the tawny beauty, subsiding into a sort of ecstatic composure, exclaimed, "Bress de Lord, massa!

I'se got it—I'se got religion!"

We were congratulating ourselves upon the results of Emily Jane's conversion, when one evening she came to her mistress asking the loan of a dress which had seen better days, but was not yet reduced to actual decrepitude.

"And pray, what do you want of my dress, Emily Jane?" asked her mistress.

"I talks ob gittin married to Brother Zeb, missus, and I kinder kalkerlated you'd leff me hab dat dress to be married in."

"But I have understood you are married already."

"Well, I is, missus; but dey'm no 'count—triflin' niggers. Tain't no sin to leff dem go for a good, pious man like Brother Zeb."

So Emily Jane went again the way of womankind; taking with her, however, only what was rightfully her own. We declined an invitation to the wedding-reception, and thereby lost a spectacle conducted in the extreme of coloured fashion—Emily Jane robed in her mistress's gown, and sitting in state for a whole week, amid a crowd of admirers, while her more sensible husband less gloriously propelled his push-cart about the railway station.

Soon the up-stairs Ida followed the way of Emily Jane; and then came the worst of our domestic experiences. Our domicile had long been a negro boarding-house, and fearing it might soon become a negro marriage-mart, I put an often-expressed resolve into execution, and replaced our blacks with an entire corps of white servants. But our last state was worse than our first; and we soon had but too good reason to regret the lazy, shiftless, thievish, but still docile, good-natured, and affectionate blacks.

ENGLISH LITERATURE AT THE UNIVERSITIES.

It is well that this interesting and important question has at length been rescued from the disturbing influences of a personal quarrel. That the unfortunate individual over whose body the writer in the 'Quarterly Review' marched to the attack of our Universities should have done his best to claim a verdict on the personal issue, is, indeed, much to be regretted, but hardly in the circumstances surprising. He had undoubtedly been placed in a difficult position. Without the semblance of a defence he was yet expected to defend himself. One course was indeed open to him, a course which, if it would not have established his claim to lecture on English literature, would at least have secured for him the sympathy and consideration of all right thinking persons, and for which his reading, if it be truly such as he and his friends affirm, might easily have furnished him with a precedent. He might have remembered in what manner Dryden met the grave charges brought against him by Jeremy Collier. The great writer, then in the fulness of his age and fame, the acknowledged chief of English letters, thought that he had been on some points harshly treated; that his meaning had been sometimes misconstrued and sometimes perverted, and that a significance had too often been given to his words which they were not intended to bear, and in fact did not bear. But on the whole he confessed that he had been justly charged. "If Mr. Collier," he said, "be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one."

But even in those days no man probably but Dryden would have had either the manliness or the sincerity for such an avowal; and it is doubtful whether even Dryden would in these days have risked it. He might have felt that the spirit of the time was too strong against it: that while too many would have rejoiced at the confession of weakness from the strong man, too few would have recognised, or at least allowed, the courage, the candour, and the dignity which alone could make such a confession possible.

Such, at any rate, was not the course of defence determined on. Far other, indeed, it was. It was one which, in truth, the somewhat eruptive energy displayed in demolishing one who had ingenuously confessed himself to be more volatile than a bird and more fragile than a shell, was but too likely to suggest to a certain sort of minds. For in truth it must be owned that the zeal of the Reviewer, if it had not precisely eaten him up, had at least (to borrow again from Dryden) not only devoured some part of his civility, but also seriously disagreed with his sense of proportion. "No man," it has been well said—and we are sure that this Reviewer least of all men needs to be reminded by whom it was said—"no man is so merciless as he who, under a strong self-delusion, confounds his antipathies with his duties." As for the defence itself, one knows not whether most to deplore it for its ignobleness or to laugh at it for its irrelevancy. But though we have said that its adoption is in the circumstances not entirely surprising, it is surprising, and most pitiful, to find men, who have been always understood to be honourable and assumed to be intelligent, not only lending their open support to so preposterous a bid for

the crown of martyrdom, but actually expressing their conviction of its point and dignity.

We have dwelt so long on this aspect of a controversy on which more than enough has long ago been said, because it seems to us to be the most deplorable circumstance of a deplorable affair. It is, indeed, to say the least of it, unfortunate, that a man holding the position of lecturer on English literature in so famous and august a place of learning as Trinity College, Cambridge, should not have taken the trouble to supply in some measure the defects of his education by such simple means as even the most learned writer is too wise to ignore: there are surely books of reference enough in these days to keep the emptiest of us straight in matters at any rate of fact, though for the defects themselves, we think that the discredit lies more with those who made the appointment than with him who holds it. But that, when it was found impossible to excuse or deny blunders resulting from a combination of ignorance and carelessness perhaps unparalleled in the history of literature, an attempt should have been made to extort sympathy for them on grounds so paltry and so degrading, not only to him who made it but to the profession of English letters generally, reflects, in our opinion, a far greater discredit on all concerned in it.

It is impossible here to give entirely in his own words the Reviewer's theory of the only system by which English literature can be adequately taught, though we shall use them as far as possible. He leads off, then, as follows:

"Much has recently been talked about the continuity of history, and the erroneous views which must necessarily result from studying it piecemeal. The continuity of literature is a fact of even more importance, and the persistency with which the fact has been ignored has not only led to errors infinitely more serious than any which can be imputed to historical teachers, but has rendered our whole system of dealing with literature, whether

historically, in tracing its development, or critically, in analysing its phenomena, as inadequate as it is unsound. One of the most remarkable illustrations of this is the fact, that the study of our own literature is, in all our schools and colleges, separated on principle from the study of Greece and Rome. . . . Now the literatures of Greece, Rome, and England, are radically and essentially connected. What the literature of Greece is to that of Rome, the literatures of Greece and Rome are to that of England. . . . Not only have most of our poets and all our best prose writers, as well in the present age as in former ages, been nourished on the literatures of Greece and Rome; not only have the forms of at least two-thirds of our best poetry and our best prose derived their distinctive features from those literatures; not only has the influence of those literatures, alternately modifying and moulding our own, determined its course and its characteristics; but a large portion of what is most valuable in our poetry is as historically unintelligible, apart from the Greek and Roman Classics, as the Epic and Lyric Poetry of Rome would be apart from the Epic and Lyric Poetry of Greece."

Then he continues through several pages to show with much truth, eloquence and learning the debt our great writers both in prose and verse have owed to the great writers in what it is the absurd fashion in some quarters to speak of as the Dead Languages. To the proposition, and it finds many supporters, that modern literatures deserve to be studied in connection with our own as well as the older literatures, he answers, in the first place, that Italian is the only modern literature that has seriously affected ours, and, in the second, that so comprehensive a study is not practical: "In no school of literature could a student be expected to read, in addition to Greek and Latin, half-a-dozen other languages, and among those languages Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and German." A choice must be made between the two, between the literatures of the old world and the literatures of the new; and, both as introductions to our own literature and as interpreters of it, he holds the former to be incomparably the most important. Again, he asserts himself to be no bigoted admirer of the ancients, and proceeds to prove

that his assertion is unquestionably just. But, because Shakespeare is a greater writer of tragedy than the great tragedians of the Attic stage; and Molière a greater writer of comedy than Terence; because Burns is the equal of Catullus, and Dryden the superior of Juvenal; because Burke is a greater orator than Cicero, and Gibbon a greater historian than Thucydides, it is absurd, he says, to maintain, as is often maintained, that "familiarity with the works of modern writers would, in the education of a student of literature, be an equivalent for familiarity with the works of the ancients." Finally he thus sums up the duty of our Universities to the literature of their own country, as he conceives that duty to be.

"What is needed, and we venture to add imperatively needed, is the institution of a school which shall stand in the same relation to pure literature, to poetry, oratory, and criticism, as the present school of history stands to history, and as the present school of *Litteræ Humaniores* stands to philosophy. In both these schools, in the former as it is about to be constituted, in the latter as it always has been constituted, the historical and philosophical classics of the old world are most properly associated with those of the new. No hard-and-fast line is drawn between philosophers and historians who write in Greek and Latin, and philosophers and historians who write in English. Both are studied, not for the light which they may happen to throw collaterally on the structure and history of language, but for the light which they throw on the subjects which are severally treated by them. Herodotus and Thucydides are accordingly included in the same curriculum as Clarendon and Gibbon. 'The Republic' and 'The Ethics' are read side by side with the essay on the 'Human Understanding' and the 'Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.' Thus not only are the masterpieces of ancient and modern philosophy brought home to the student, but their relations to each other are rendered intelligible. . . . Why, we ask, should not the same view be taken of the work of Sophocles and Shakespeare, of Cicero and Burke? Are they not 'parts of one living whole'? Is not poetry, poetry; oratory, oratory; criticism, criticism, in whatever language they may be expressed? And is not the study of literature the study of its development generally, and of its masterpieces particularly? Why the works of a philosopher or a historian who writes in a classical lan-

guage should be studied as illustrating philosophy and history, while the works of a poet or of an orator who writes in a classical language should be regarded as mere material for construing,—why University men should be expected to know in what way modern metaphysics have been affected by Plato and modern ethics by Aristotle, and should not be expected to know in what way modern poetry has been affected by Homer and Horace, and modern oratory by Demosthenes and Cicero—we cannot understand. But of one thing we are quite sure, that it is high time, both in the interests of our classical literature and of our own literature, to take this question into serious consideration, and to see whether the institution of such a school, or some school similar to such a school as we have suggested, be indeed practicable. What the nation has a right to expect from the Universities is that they should provide as adequately for the dissemination of literary culture as they have provided for other branches of education. And this we contend they can never do, if, on the one hand, for the study of the two leading and master literatures of the world, the literatures which are and must always be the basis of the education of which we are speaking, they substitute the study of what certain educational theorists are pleased to call modern equivalents; and if, on the other hand, they continue to exclude our own literature from their curriculum."

No competent judge, to use the Reviewer's own words,—certainly not that Judicious Man whom we have all heard so much of—would, we suppose, deny that this view of the principles on which English literature should be studied, is in the main a sound and reasonable one. But we think that one or two arguments, not in support of a different view, but rather modifying and, as it were, limiting this one, might also be found worth consideration.

Although the Reviewer has generally coupled the literature of our own time with that of times antecedent, as owing its inspiration and its form to the literature of antiquity, yet only in three cases has he sought his illustrations among the writers of the present century. In one respect he has certainly done wisely. In showing the amount of the debt owed by our great orators and our great divines to the orators and prose-writers of Greece and Rome he has indeed done well to

confine himself to past times. Admirable as for their respective purposes they no doubt are, no one would, we apprehend, maintain that the style of Lord Randolph Churchill and the style of the Reverend Mr. Haweis have been modelled on the masterpieces of antiquity. The fact, as we take it, is, that while the Reviewer has made his case indisputably good up to the close of what is generally called the literature of the eighteenth century, it would not be difficult to find some weak points in it, so far, at any rate, as English poetry is concerned, when we enter upon that new era which begins with the names of Burns, Cowper, and Wordsworth. It is true that Wordsworth is one of the modern writers named as really intelligible only to a student of the Platonic Philosophy. But this is surely true only of a part of his work, and that, as many of his admirers and one of his best critics think, not the best part. Certain of his poems have been directly classified as akin to the antique, the famous ode on the 'Intimations of Immortality' and 'Laodameia' being of course conspicuous among them. But of the bulk of his lyrical pieces, such pieces as, 'The Solitary Reaper,' 'The Daffodils,' those on Yarrow, on Matthew, and on Lucy, — surely their connexion with the Classics is slight indeed. Of Byron, again, another of the modern poets named, it is, no doubt, true that, in his earlier satirical pieces, as holding directly of Pope, he may be said to hold of Horace, whom, of course, in one of his pieces he has simply paraphrased. But in the greater part of his work, his romantic tales, 'Don Juan,' 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,' and his dramas, a classical influence is, we should be inclined to say, not very easy to trace.¹ Take again such

poets as Burns, Crabbe, Scott, Campbell, and Coleridge; by what Greek or Roman writer was the best of their work, either in thought or form, inspired? Nor can the poetry of Keats be truly said to owe anything to the ancient models; for though his earlier work was stimulated by the fancies of the Greek mythology, the native forms of their expression were a sealed book to him; and in his best work, his odes 'To a Grecian Urn,' 'To the Nightingale,' and 'To Autumn,' except in the love they breathe of things beautiful for beauty's sake, which he owed to his temperament and not to any training, there is scant trace of any classic models. It would be easy, of course, to find arguments on the other side; in almost all of Landor's work, for example, both in prose and verse, can they be found, and in much of Shelley's. Southey's prose would hardly have been of such fine quality but for his classical training. De Quincey, again, owed something to the same source, who has well described himself as holding on to the old world with one hand, and with the other to the new.

The truth is that in a chain of continuity stretching from Homer and Herodotus to Wordsworth and Carlyle (to keep living writers out of the argument) it is inevitable that there must be some weak links: and as the universal acceptance of the necessity for a classical education diminishes, as the hurry and struggle of life leave less leisure for any real education at all, as the number of writers swells, so will those weak links inevitably grow weaker, and their number increase. The statement that all English literature can be truly appreciated, and its significance understood, only by students of the literatures of Greece and Rome, is too broad. It cannot, we think, be maintained. But it is beyond all question true of a very con-

¹ The fact of a work containing allusions to classical subjects—the thoughts, the actions, or the art of classical times—or even an occasional quotation or paraphrase from some ancient writer, is not, of course, in itself enough to give that work the classical stamp. There are many such allusions in Carlyle's

writings, very many in Mr. Ruskin's—writings surely framed on no antique model our eyes have ever seen.

siderable part of our English literature, and of a very important part: while even of that part which does not directly hold of them, or even has nothing in common with them, it seems to us equally true, that a knowledge of the Classics must in many cases materially enhance both the pleasure with which we read it and the value it has for us. What, as the Reviewer says, when insisting on the value to be gained by comparing even our native Shakespeare with the Greek tragedians, what can be more interesting or more profitable than to note how the same truths, the same passions, the same sentiments, have found independent utterance in writers divided from each other by the vast gulf of centuries?

Let it, then, be fully granted, that to make a student (in the largest and most comprehensive sense of that much-tormented word) of English literature, such a course of study as that proposed in the 'Quarterly Review' is necessary; and that without such a course of study no man has the right to profess himself competent to instruct others in that literature. There still remains an important point to consider: with what object were these Chairs of English Literature founded in our Universities? That object, we apprehend, is the instruction of the undergraduates. It is said, indeed, that the proportion of undergraduates who attend such lectures is not large; that, in point of fact, the audience is mainly composed of those zealous but mistaken females whose yearnings for a University education are threatening to transform Oxford and Cambridge into a sort of glorified girls' schools. "It would be uncandid," Sir Francis Doyle has lately told us in his *Reminiscences*, "if I did not admit that I often addressed myself to bonnets and frocks rather than caps and gowns; more than once, indeed, I might almost have supposed myself Poetry Professor to Girton instead of at Oxford." But, however this may be, it is obvious that the business of the tutorial staff

of our Universities must primarily lie with those for whose instruction those venerable and stately halls of learning were reared.

It will hardly be disputed that a taste for their own literature is not universal among young Englishmen. Perhaps a taste for any literature is not universal. But by the time they have reached the Universities the Classics have come to be regarded almost as an indispensable portion of their young existences, suffered perhaps in the majority of cases not gladly, but still accepted as inevitable. And possibly in more cases than are commonly supposed custom has bred a sort of regard. Men who make no pretensions to scholarship, and whose lives, when they have gone out into the great world, have left them no leisure, even were the inclination there, for books, are often found to entertain a dim, perhaps, but not unkindly memory of the Greek and Latin lessons of their youth. We suspect that for one man who could be called well read in his own literature it would be easy to find a hundred with a tolerable smattering of at least the best known writings of antiquity. But boys as a rule will not learn what they are not taught; and with the large majority of them instruction in their own literature has probably been, to say the least, a little overlooked. There will always, of course, be exceptions to the rule; but those exceptions will be generally formed more by nature than training. Even of those who of their own will turn occasionally to English literature, the most part go rarely beyond the literature of their own epoch. Scott and Macaulay, Thackeray and Dickens, mark, we suspect, in most cases the limit of these literary researches into the backward of time. With the large proportion of boys (and it is unnecessary to assume for that proportion any phenomenal idleness or want of parts) the more serious side of their own literature is probably represented by such books as Holden's '*Foliorum Silvula*' and ex-

tracts, more or less elegant, prepared for recital on Speech-day—a form of instruction hardly, perhaps, calculated to stimulate minds not ravenous of knowledge. The result is that every year the Universities are recruited by young men who for their age may be called very fair Greek and Latin scholars, but yet as regards their own literature are in a state which it would hardly be libellous to call profoundly ignorant.

There is surely, then, a question whether such a course of instruction as that propounded in the 'Quarterly Review' might not be found too severe for these young, untrained ideas. Instead of teaching them how to shoot, might it not (to somewhat change the metaphor) have a tendency to make them shy of the gun? It is, of course, right and reasonable that he whose mission in life it is to teach others should himself know, to use a familiar phrase, the best that has been thought and said on the subject of his teaching. A man whose business it is to teach English literature, (and we do not mean by this a man who imparts in his leisure hours such information as those hours have enabled him to pick up) would no doubt very inadequately discharge his business unless he were equipped by such a course of training as that above set forth. And we may go farther and allow that, in the event of such a School as that foreshadowed by the Reviewer being established, it would be right to expect aspirants to Honours in that School to have prepared themselves in a similar way. Whether such a School is a possible thing, whether even, in all the circumstances and conditions of the case, it is a wholly desirable thing, is a different matter. At present it is the fact that no such School does exist. It is also a fact, that has perhaps been a little lost sight of in the dust of this controversy, that the whole question of teaching English literature is at present, as one may say, in the air at both Universities. At any rate it is on its trial; and it is as yet too early

even to guess at the probable results of the movement in that direction either at Oxford or Cambridge. But we fancy we can see the horns of a possible dilemma already shaping themselves in the misty future. Is this desired School of English Literature to be an alternative for the present Classical School? If so, how is the necessary classical training to be provided? To count the number of boys who in any given year will bring it up with them from their public schools would hardly lay much strain on a tapster's arithmetic. The training indispensable for the examinations previous to the final examination will hardly provide it in either the necessary quality or quantity. If it be made possible to take a degree in English literature, the general nature of undergraduates must have undergone a surprising change indeed, if large numbers of them do not avail themselves of the chance of escaping from the study of literatures concealed in tongues more or less unknown to the study of a literature touched with the comparative charm that belongs to a familiar dialect. Are such students likely to voluntarily double their studies? For that is practically what it will come to: they must study Greek and Latin in order to take a degree in English. The Reviewer, we presume, will hardly contend that it will be sufficient for the teacher to know what he is talking about. It will surely avail little that he shall be able to dilate, though never so wisely, on the debt of Johnson to Quintilian or of Wordsworth to Plato, to hearers who have never read a line of Plato or Quintilian. The unknown has, we all know, its own charm; but its value as an educational instrument is not large. And if this English School is to be merely facultative; merely, that is to say, a School through which an undergraduate may pass in addition to the Classical School,—just as now he may pass, or might in days not long distant pass, through the additional Schools of Mathematics, or History, or Science;

how many students is it likely to win? If it be obligatory; if the undergraduate must pass it in addition to his Classical School, then surely the term of a University course will have to be very materially lengthened—lengthened, we imagine, to a term that few, save those who propose to devote their lives to the study of literature, could afford to give to it. But, after all, we are ourselves at present no more than in the air on this subject. If the School ever be established, no doubt all these possible contingencies will have been foreseen, and will be provided for.

To keep, then, to our original contention: remembering to how very few of those who are likely during their University course to be persuaded to the study of their own literature (and the remark is equally good if the study be obligatory), that study can be more hereafter than the pleasure and refreshment of their leisure hours, there does seem to us a possible source of danger in this insistence on a too vigorous and exhausting course of instruction. Few, we say, are they to whom these early studies can be the preparation for the business of their lives: yet many it may be surely possible to inoculate with a love of their literature, with some power of understanding it, some capacity for judging it. It is not quite with our literature as with the literatures of Greece and Rome. Their value is twofold: there is the value of the mental training gained by the study of the languages; and there is the value of the infinite intellectual treasures which the acquisition of these languages will reveal. Yet some have doubted—men least of all minded to disparage the importance of a knowledge of the Classics, whose own classical training, if not very profound or accurate, has yet been of inestimable service to them—some, we say, have doubted whether the system commonly adopted to impart this knowledge to young people be the best of all possible systems. They have doubted whether the laborious and in-

tricate process that may make one boy in time a scholar, may not render disgusting what might under happier conditions have become a source of at least much intellectual pleasure to hundreds. The young men of our Universities are of course no longer as school-boys. But, having regard to the neglect of their own literature, in comparison with the ancient literatures, which has almost certainly characterised the lessons of their school-time, when, in their University career, they are brought to the study of the former, they may perhaps without offence be considered as standing somewhat on the footing of boys for the first time driven up to the outworks of the great citadels of Greece and Rome. And just as the latter are too often repelled at the outset by a dry and pedantic method of teaching, so may it possibly be with the former. There is so much to learn, so little time to learn it in; the attention of young people, even when they have assumed the style and garb of men, is so easily distracted, their inclination to learn so easily crushed, their powers of learning so easily exhausted. Let the general principles of the Reviewer's theory be cordially granted: probably no one will deny that it is a shameful thing for young people to be allowed to pass through the critical years of their education in ignorance of the qualities and importance of their own literature; despite the quantities of nonsense that late years have let loose, very few of those competent to judge will, we believe, deny the great value of a classical training; if not absolutely essential to every state of life, there is surely none in which an intelligent man will not find himself the happier for that training, and his powers of usefulness bettered by it. But, excellent as this theory is, it will be found, we suspect, like so many other theories, necessary to closely regulate and bound it before it can be brought to any practical issue. And more than this: waiving the practical side of the question, we strongly doubt whether,

from the point of view we have wished to consider (which must, as we think, be considered), it is even desirable to press it to the last letter of its law. Granted that it be impossible to elucidate the significance of the work of Milton and Gray without any reference to the ancient literatures to which they both owed so much: it would be not only possible, but we venture to think it might be even desirable to elucidate the significance of Shakespeare's work (so far as our intelligences are capable of such a feat!) without any reference to the treatises of Aristotle.

There is, before concluding, one other point on which we wish shortly to dwell. Among the many contributions which have been made to this discussion within the last few weeks was one, printed in an evening paper, from Mr. William Morris. There are not many people whom one would more gladly hear on matters of literature than the author of 'The Life and Death of Jason': would, indeed, that he were more often heard! He took the view that the Universities had best let the matter alone. Those disasters, as he called them, the Slade Professorships of Art, ought to show them the inutility of establishing Chairs whose occupiers would be obliged "to deal vaguely with great subjects." Philology, he said, can be taught; but English literature cannot. Neither would he admit any analogy between the proposed study of English literature at the Universities and the accepted study of the Classics; the study of the latter implies the study of the language and history of civilised antiquity; they are not taught, at any rate not criticised, as literature. To this it might be answered that the pity of it, as many think, lies in the very fact that the Classics are not taught more as literature than they are; and also, that the real study of English literature would necessarily in a great measure include, as would the real study of any literature, the study of its language and its history.

But the capital point of Mr. Morris's letter lies in this paragraph.

"What is intended seems to me a Chair of *Criticism*; and against the establishment of such a Chair I protest emphatically. For the result would be merely vague talk about literature, which would teach nothing. Each succeeding professor would strive to outdo his predecessor in 'originality' on subjects whereon nothing original remains to be said. Hyper-refinement and paradox would be the order of the day, and the younger students would be confused by the literary polemics which would be sure to flourish round such a Chair."

In these sentences Mr. Morris strikes his finger directly not on the possible weak place only, but, in one case at any rate, on the weak place that actually is. Its blunders apart, the unfortunate book that has been recently issued from the Cambridge Press, if it be really a fair specimen of the style and substance of the lectures delivered in the hall of Trinity College, may be said to contain the very quintessence of the form in which English literature should not be presented to young people—or, for the matter of that, to anybody. Simplicity and straightforwardness have been named as the cardinal virtues of the best poetry; they might, we think, be named as the cardinal virtues of all good literature. It is, at any rate, certain that whoever undertakes to instruct young minds in literature (one might say, indeed, on any subject) cannot be too simple or too straightforward. Yet if it be possible to name any two qualities which are in this unlucky book pre-eminently conspicuous by their absence, those are the two we should select. But, indeed, the danger which Mr. Morris foresees as inevitably threatening the establishment of any Chair of English Literature in our Universities, is precisely that which has been more than once commented on in this magazine. The hyper-refinement, the paradox, the continual striving after originality—what are they all but the characteristics of an Alexandrian Age? And what they lead to has now received so significant an illustration, that we may

surely hope to see in the future, on the part of those responsible for the education of the young ideas, a determination to save them at least from the confusion and the errors inseparable from such a system of teaching.

We could wish to find space to consider one or two other points in Mr. Morris's letter; but it is not now possible to do more than call attention to them. His recommendation of enlarging the present sphere of the Professor of Poetry's duties has been, indeed, already urged by Sir Francis Doyle, who speaks with the authority of one who has held that Chair.¹ It

certainly seems an anomaly to divide the study of English poetry from the study of English literature, though Mr. Matthew Arnold has shown how much a Professor of Poetry can do to remove the landmarks of a jealous conventionality. Most interesting also would it be to consider what Mr. Morris means when he says that English literature cannot be taught. If he means (as we take him to mean) that the profit and completeness of its study must mainly rest with the student; that the period of our life, commonly called the period of our education, can only be a preparation for that study; and that the most our teachers can do is to indicate and inspire,—then we are most cordially with him. And the acceptance of this view will form the strongest argument against pressing any such theory of instruction as that propounded in the 'Quarterly Review' to a too rigorous and universal system of practice.

¹ "The holder of this professorship, I think, ought to fill a more important part than he does in University life. He should have a much larger salary, do a great deal more work, and exercise jurisdiction over wider provinces of criticism and thought. In point of fact, as I have always thought, he should reside in Oxford, devote his whole time to his business, and be professor, not of poetry alone, but of literature in general."—'Reminiscences and Opinions,' ch. xix.

NANCY DEDMAN.

"It was an ugly bit of travelling, I can tell you, over Hinde Head in my young days; as lonesome a place as any in the country round. And it weren't for nothing as they gived the place to the Devil neither;—there's the Devil's Jumps over to Frensham, and his Punchbowl at your feet; and over to the Downs you sees his very marks! his claws as where he grabbed as he fell. And the deeds done round about were his own and no mistake.

"I'm thinking now of a tale as is not so known as it should be. That stone before ye tells of the poor sailor chap as was murdered here, for his money no doubt—coming from Portsmouth he were; but no stone nor no book, so far as I know, has spoke for Nancy Dedman.

"Hers was a death indeed. I can't speak to the partiklars, for I had it as it were handed down through ninety years and more; but I won't tell you a lie if I can help it; and for all I haven't it chapter and verse, it's wonderful lifesome, too.

"The Dedmans lived, when they was to home, in a bit of a place in the Combe there. You might pass within a yard of it and not see it, so grandfather said. They was of a smuggling crew. There was a chain of them smugglers, from Portsmouth all the way, and a wild set they was. They had the country on their side though; and the coastguardses was thought no better of than they deserved. There was two brothers, Dick and Joe Dedman, and their father; and Nancy was the one girl. She was a beauty by all accounts—very wild too, and as rare a one at smuggling as any of them; and she would ride bareback on any horse, and be out all night and all day; and many's the time when she's kept the coastguardses at bay,

and done many a bit of business as wanted a woman's wit and a man's strength.

"She must have been still a lass when there was news of a rare lot of spirits and baccy (it was the war time), and the word was passed along the line from Portsmouth to Hinde Head, and beyond too, in course. And the King's men got wind on it, and they made ready for a fray—they thought as how they would break the neck of this smuggling business; more fools they! as if poor men was to be put down and denied their rights so easy! Well, it seems as they'd planned to put so many at each of the smuggling posts, all ready—and they said they would settle all, and easy too, excepting the Dedman lot, on account of Dick Dedman; he was a wonderful power of a man! They'd had a warrant agin him ever so long, but never could lay hand on him, nor find out where he put up. So one of the King's men, (a sharp young fellow, whose father were a farmer but lately come over to this side of Godalming,) he took the job. And he dropped down one day on Nancy Dedman in the Combe, and made out as he were a sailor on his way to Lunnion; and he asked for a bite and a drink. And she looked him up and down, and her deciment were that he meant no harm, so she asked him in and gave it he. And he talked from one to t'other of foreign parts and the wars; and Nancy, she were terrible took up with it all; and he had, they said, a way with him, and he were an honest young chap, too, but for his trade. Well, without so much as her finding out, she gets to tell he that she is alone till the night, till the old man come, and that he and the lads was away; Joe to Guildford and Dick to the mill over by Haslemere;

he was but lately come back and keeping quiet; giving his work, and every one was on his side, and would not betray he to any of the King's men—she, who was that sharp they called her 'Hawk-eyed Nance,' she were drawn on and on—and he wound up with more of his tales, and went on his way, leaving her a thinking on the Indies, and wishing she might see the sailor again.

"But he, he went back to his mates, and they followed Dick up, and sure enough they nailed him at the mill, and he were warranted and throw'd into jail. Well, the fray come off, and the coastguardses beat the smugglers all along the line, and Joe Dedman was killed in the fray, and the old man swore as he would track the traitor who told on Dick, and take his life for his son Joe; for had Dick been there he would have made one too many for the devils of King's men. Nancy hadn't a thought as how it were she; no, not when at the Haslemere Fairing she met the sailor, who said as how he'd settled down with his father, old Farmer Kemp, to God-alming—which was truth, for he'd giv'd up the coastguarding.

"One way and another they was always meeting, and young Kemp he lost his heart to she, and they say as he told his father as he must have Nancy Dedman or he would be off to the war. The old farmer shook'd his head, but he could never give his son any denial, and when once he brought Nancy to see the old man, he said he were bound to confess that Nancy had the ways of a lady, for all she were so brown, and was of the Dedman lot. It made a deal of talk, but old Dedman, he took no heed, till one day—it were soon after Dick come home; I never heard who gotten him out, but it were soon after. Well, one day Nancy spoke up that she was going to get married and to young Farmer Kemp. There *was* a kick-up! the old man and Dick had set their minds to give Nancy to one of their crew to Portsmouth; to keep her in the trade,

and to keep theirselves fair with the head crew there. And the whole crew was mad after Nancy Dedman. Nancy stood to it that she'd marry young Kemp; and they gave her a time of it! a reg'lar persecution as ever you find in Fox's Martyrs, short of the stake we'll say. But Nancy were none of they kittle sort; she stood to her say—and one day when they was out of the house but not far off, for they never left she alone—Jim Kemp crawled in from among the bracken (she'd advertised he of the danger) and tells her as his father was just dead, and he must have an end of this, and will she fix the day? He said as how he'd come and take her away by force if need be, he and some of his old mates; and as she was puzzling how he could get a lot of sailors all of a sudden (you see she know'd nought of the coast guards business), Dick looked in at the door! and his face was the devil's own as it flashed to he that there stood the man as had nailed him in the mill and had him to prison. And Nancy saw him; and Jim saw him, and turned milk-white; Dick's look was enough to curdle your very blood. 'Traitor! Nance!' said he; 'so you were a carrying on and we never know'd it! and it was *you* as told on your own flesh and blood, and your father's curse and mine too——' 'Hold there,' cried young Jim, hitting Dick on the mouth to stop his curses (they was afraid of curses then) 'hold there! She never knew'—and he poured it all out as how it happened, and as how he was always thinking on Nancy, and so giv'd up the coastguarding, part on her account and part on his father's. But afore he had ended Dick were gone, and Nancy was all on a heap with nought to say—but her look cut up young Jim and no mistake. I won't say but that he deserved it—for he'd been double with her—through love on her no doubt, but it's allays best to be straight, and so he felt too late; and that had he spoke truth when he told his love he could but ha' lost her once, and now

he had lost her twice ; and the losing on her respect were worse nor the losing she.

"She were a wonderful power of a woman for all as was in her, and she'd had little love except from Joe, and he were dead. So she said to Jim she forgave him, but it were all to an end between they : she'd love he all the days, but she couldn't wed her brother's murderer. That were all.

"Well, the next on it was that when they found as she'd given he up, they believed she had nought to say to it, and was kind to her agin : as kind as they ever was, and that warn't much ; but she was unaisy, and knew them too well to think as they 'ud let Jim Kemp be. Whyever Dick hadn't killed him there and then she could not tell. But one night she were to bed, and she heard some un come in to the room next ; her room were but a lean-to, and they slept in the big room. And she heard a deal of whispering, and then they took to drinking and their voices gets louder, and she hears Kemp's name, and 'the night after next' named, and 'back from Weyhill Fair,' and 'a-nigh his gate,' and 'ten on us,' and 'the rest will be there to-morrow, we four and they six, that's ten.' And then they gets noisier, and Dick, who always kept his head, hushed some one on 'em up, and turned him out into the shed, and all was still. Nancy knew now what was brewing ! But how to get at Jim ? how to advertise he ? He would be off to Weyhill long afore she could get to he, and she couldn't get out without going through the room with Dick in it, or through the window into the shed with the stranger there. Not that they was strangers, for she know'd their voices ; they was of the Portsmouth crew.

"What should she do ? how should she save her lover ? for he was her lover, and she know'd it. She know'd that though she could never wed with he, she could never love another. Mayhap there was som'at strange in

her manners, for all she made as though she was cheerful like, or may be it were from his own knowing what was coming ; anyhow Dick looked sharply after Nance all next day, and the day after too. It were a hot, dry summer, and the days were long, and there was a full moon that night, and no doubt that was the more convenient ; not but what the Dedmans could make their way blindfold anywhere over the country round, and all their crew.

"Dick went off somewhere to seven, and said, careless like, as Nancy had best not wait, for he and the old man had business away, and would not be back till very late mayhap, mayhap earlier. Nance waited till he was gone, then she took her flint and steel and fastened the door, and went to the shed and took the nag (they had only left the old mare) ; she didna' wait to bridle she, but off she went as fast as the wind for Holder Hill, over to the sou'-west from here. And she rode and rode and went up the hill, up to the Beacon Point, and there was the bonfire all laid ready,¹ as dry as tinder, and she struck and struck and the third time she got a flame, and soon the beacon was blazing and no mistake ; and she rode and she rode toward Blackdown, until the poor beast could go no longer, so she got off and let her go. And Nance walked and walked, until all on a sudden the light sprung up on Blackdown, and she knew as sure as if she saw him that her trap had taken, that Jim had seen the fire on Holder, and instead of going home had turned off to light up Blackdown.

"It was the war time, you see, and he were keen for the cause, and was the first once before to help light up the signal. And she hurried on and came up to he, and he turned round and cried, 'Why, Nancy, love ! is it you ? There's been some victory, you may depend !' And she, she were out of breath and could scarce speak ; but

¹ Signalling was done with beacon fires at night, and with semaphores by day.

she knew as sure as fate her brother and his crew would come after their prey. You see they had worked so long together, these Dedmans, one seemed to guess the other's thoughts like; and she knew as when the time went by, and Jim did not come home, and they saw the light on Holder Hill and sudden the light on Black-down, they would guess as how it were Nancy; or may be only think Jim was there instead of coming home. However it be, she felt they would follow up there, so she cried, 'Fly, Jim! fly! as quick as you can, down that way. No! not home! Be off, be off! away as far as you can go. Take your horse and go! They're after ye to murder ye, and I lit the fire on Holder to turn you from going home. They be waiting for you, and now may be they'll be following you up here. Give me your coat and hat, Jim—see, I've none. I'm cold. And go, Jim—go; I can't go with you, Jim. Good-bye, lad! Oh, lad, I love you, lad!' And the stupid, thick-headed fellow as he was, he took off his long riding-coat and his slouch hat and puts them on her, and takes her in his arms, and she gives him one kiss and sends him off. He steals down as quiet as a mouse, untethers his nag, and off he goes London way. And Nance? She stood with her arms folded, her face to the fire and her back to the path, so as her figure is seen up against the flames in an uncertain kind of way. She was as tall as young Kemp; and she waited there to gain time for he—a decoy, we'll say. She were half-dazed with what she'd gone through, and a strange sort of awaiting feeling as kep' her very still. At last she hears them coming, and she never stirs. And Dick, from behind, without waiting a minute, or taking so much as a step for'arder, fires straight at her back and she falls forward, and he fires again, and then they walked away, satisfied it were Jim Kemp, for

they seed the coat and they never thought of Nancy.

"Well, morning came, and as they went back and found the house empty they thought she'd given them the slip, and they laughed as how they had served her right; they little knew *how* they had served her. They wasn't long a-laughing; the fires had made a bestirment, and there they'd found Nancy Dedman—dead, shot twice through the back. And when they brought her in, the old man fell down in a fit, but Dick he said nought, only when they said, 'Had Jim Kemp done this foul deed?' for his papers was in his pockets, Dick said, 'How should he know? He had allays told Nance to have nought to do with that devil Kemp.'

"There was an inquiry, but nought came of it. Old Dedman had another fit and died, and Dick went over the seas, they said. Farmer Kemp, young Jim as was, never come back to settle. He sold up, and nobody would have know'd a word about it only he come once, when he was getting in years, to look at Nancy's grave to Haslemere.

"He told all as he know'd to the sexton, Mr. Keeling; and years after, Dick came as a stranger, and asked for the grave of one Nancy Dedman, as he had a fancy to see. Though he was an old grey man much beshaken, and with nought about he to speak of murder, Mr. Keeling, as was always one with two pair of eyes, determined on seeing justice done, and he tracks the man to the inn, and brings the parson, who was magistrate into the bargain. But the parson found a broken-down old man, and he would not make any bestir; it were too long ago, he said. And afore Dick Dedman died he and the parson were the best of friends, and from Dick parson had it all. After Dick died, he telled Mr. Keeling, who fitted in his part, and so it was told and told again, and the tale was well known when I was a boy, though nobody speaks of it now."

THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS.

To those who still believe in the importance of a classical education, it is an encouraging sign that as the area of the study of Greek is lessening year by year in England, its intensity is as steadily increasing. Step by step even the most strenuous upholders of the old system are being driven back by the force of public opinion, which says (rightly or wrongly we need not here discuss) that a knowledge of Greek is not necessary; and by the cry of parents who say that they will not have their sons taught, in these times of stress, what they consider to be at best an elegant accomplishment. At the same time we see in our universities and in our public schools a growing tendency to place classical study upon a wider and a sounder basis. It is felt that it is no longer enough to instil into the youthful mind the mysteries of the verb in μ , or the subtle and manifold meanings of $\mu\epsilon\nu$ and $\delta\epsilon$; but that through the gate of an accurate knowledge of a perfectly constructed language, the student should be continually invited to look beyond into the country which produced and at the men who used that language; to realise the part they played in the history of the world; to understand the high and noble ideas which inspired not merely their literature but their art, and in a sense the homeliest details of their daily life. Twenty, nay even ten years ago, a boy might pass, and pass with credit, through Eton and Oxford, through Harrow and Cambridge, and yet be ignorant of the very elements of Greek art. The mere names of Phidias and Praxiteles might conceivably be known to him, but he

could certainly not place them in the history of their art, and would probably have seen neither cast nor photograph of their works. Still less would he hear of the art of the architect, the potter, the vase-painter, or the maker of coins. Now, happily, we have passed into a different era. The niceties of language are no less studied than of yore. Comparative philology, the study of dialects, the careful examination of the style and vocabulary of individual authors, have indeed, in this very department of Greek study, introduced a far more fruitful and scientific method. But it is recognised that there are other departments which are no less important, although they had been so long neglected. The group of subjects comprised under the general term "archæology" are now beginning to receive their due share of attention, not only at Oxford and Cambridge, but in our leading public schools.

At Cambridge there has been established a Readership, and at Oxford a Professorship of Classical Archæology. At Cambridge has been formed an admirable museum of casts of the typical monuments of ancient sculpture, together with a reference-library of works bearing upon every branch of ancient art. At Cambridge, also, the old Classical Tripos has been subdivided so as to enable students, after qualifying in the preliminaries of scholarship, to devote themselves to special branches of classical study, archæology among them. At Oxford the subject is receiving scarcely less attention, although it is not yet definitely recognised in the Schools.

The leading classical teachers there are fully alive to the importance of archaeology, and a collection of casts is in course of formation. In the same connexion, it is only fair to mention recent publications of the two University Presses: Prof. Michaelis's invaluable account of the private collections of ancient marbles in Great Britain, Professor Gardner's 'Types of Greek Coins,' Dr. Waldstein's 'Essays on the Art of Phidias,' and Mr. Roberts's forthcoming hand-book of Greek Inscriptions, on the part of Cambridge; Mr. Hicks's 'Manual of Greek Historical Inscriptions,' and Mr. Head's forthcoming 'Manual of Greek Numismatics,' on the part of Oxford.

The idea of establishing a school for the study of Greek archaeology in the very centre of Greek civilisation is due to the French, whose school at Athens was founded just forty years ago. The German Institute there was established, as a branch of the much earlier Institute at Rome, in 1876. Six years later the scholars of the United States, defying the limitations of time and space, also founded a home of learning in a land whose ancient inhabitants had no conception of the New World. The vision of an English school at Athens upon the same lines, had been present to the minds and familiar in the mouths of many scholars, and others interested in Greek studies, for some years, and had found occasional expression in the magazines and elsewhere. But its fulfilment seemed far enough off, when an article published by Professor Jebb, in the 'Fortnightly Review' for May, 1883, unexpectedly brought the question to the front. Mr. Escott, then editor of the Review, warmly interested himself in the matter, and found means to bring it before the Prince of Wales. A meeting was shortly afterwards held at Marlborough House, and a strong committee formed to carry the scheme into execution. Considering the difficulties which attend all such undertakings, and

especially when the object in view does not readily appeal to the millionaire or the man in the street, this committee made good progress in the three years they held office. They did not, as they wished, raise a capital sum of twenty thousand pounds; perhaps few of them ever thought this possible. But considerably over four thousand pounds have been raised. A valuable site upon Mount Lycabettus was generously given by the Greek government, and on this site, at a cost of rather more than three thousand pounds, a good house has been built for the Director and a library. An income of four hundred pounds a year has been promised by corporate bodies and by individuals for three years, a period which will allow of the experiment being put to a fair test. An excellent Director for the first year has been secured in Mr. F. C. Penrose, than whom no available Englishman is better qualified to start such an enterprise upon the right lines. The provisional committee has now been dissolved, and a permanent managing committee has been appointed with full powers.

But it is time to inquire what this school is intended to do. The question will be best answered, in the first instance, by a statement of the objects of the school as defined in the regulations which have just been drawn up by the managing committee. They are these:

- I.—The first aim of the School shall be to promote the study of Greek archaeology in all its departments. Among these shall be (i.) the study of Greek art and architecture in their remains of every period; (ii.) the study of inscriptions; (iii.) the exploration of ancient sites; (iv.) the tracing of ancient roads and routes of traffic.
- II.—Besides being a School of Archaeology it shall be also, in the most comprehensive sense, a School of Classical Studies. Every period of the Greek language and literature, from the earliest age to the present day, shall be considered as coming within the province of the School.

- III.—The School shall also be a centre at which information can be obtained and books consulted by British travellers in Greece.
- IV.—For these purposes a Library shall be formed and maintained of archaeological and other suitable books, including maps, plans, and photographs.

This programme will be felt to be at once explicit and comprehensive. The enthusiasts who founded the French School at Athens are said to have founded it in the first instance for the purpose of studying the Greek Classics under the beautiful sky of their own land. However this may be, it is certain that the blossom of sentiment has borne the fruit of solid work. Many an historical problem, many an obscure point in the religious and political and social development of the Greeks, many an interesting question in the history of art, of industry, or of commerce, has received illumination, if not solution, from the patient investigations of the successive directors and students of the French and German Institutes at Athens. It is enough to mention the excavations at Delos and Olympia, and the researches of Messieurs Dumont, Köhler, and Foucart. They have shown the way, and it is now for English scholars to follow in their footsteps, and emulate their achievements. But even apart from such problems, scores of which still invite the labours of generations of students, the advantage to the classical teacher of personal familiarity with Greek scenes and monuments can scarcely be exaggerated. Emphatic testimony on this point was recently borne by the head-masters of Eton and Harrow. Dr. Warre, at the recent meeting of subscribers to the British School, spoke of the advantage to be derived in teaching from the accurate delineation and description of the works of ancient art and manufacture. Dr. Fearon went so far as to say that he would like to see a personal knowledge of the countries about which he

was to teach insisted upon as a preliminary qualification for every classical lecturer, or master in a public school. On the same side we may quote the still more emphatic testimony of Professor Goodwin, the first Director of the American School at Athens. In the report issued after his year of office Professor Goodwin said, in speaking of those who were to carry on the classical teaching of schools and universities :

"I am conscious of no better preparation for enthusiastic work, after they have obtained the book-learning commonly deemed necessary for their profession, than to spend eight months in the study of Greece herself, in viewing her temples and learning the secrets of their architecture, and in studying geography and history at once by exploring her battle-fields, her lines of communication through her mountain passes, and the sites of her famous cities. So you can study history in riding over the plains of Boeotia, and visiting in quick succession Orchomenos, Chersonesus, Lenetra, Platea, and Thebes. So you can study history in making the circuit of the plain of Mantinea, and in forcing your way through the rocky passes which lead to the beautiful valley of Sparta. Before you get to Sparta you will see why none of these rough stones were needed to build walls for the city; and before you leave the valley you will understand better the discipline of Lycurgus, with its iron money and its black broth, and the hardihood of Leonidas and the men of Thermopylae."

"I believe," adds the Professor in words which will be echoed by most people who have thought seriously about the subject, and especially by all who have spent even a short time in Athens,

"I believe, that any scholar who should take in these object-lessons, with the host of others which follow them, in a rapid journey through Greece, and then make a study of the monuments of Athens herself, and of the topography of Athens and Attica, would never regret the year devoted to the pleasant work; and I believe, further, that any school or college which might hereafter employ him as its teacher of Greek would have made the best possible investment if it had paid his expenses while he was doing it. And, apart from all the purely antiquarian interest which every stone in Athens awakens in the scholar, I am sure that no one can dwell in daily sight of the dark rock

of the Acropolis, crowned with the stately Parthenon, meeting his eyes at every turn in the crowded streets of modern Athens, as it met the eyes of the ancient Athenians, and become familiar with the calm beauty and dignity of this favourite home of Athens, without feeling that merely to live under its shadow is in itself an education."

The final sentence strikes once more the chord of sentiment which thrilled the founders of the French school. And true it is that sentiment is no small factor in such an enterprise. But surely it is a noble sentiment, springing from a recognition of the high services rendered by the Greeks to the cause of humanity, and leading moreover to a practical result in the enlargement of the bounds of knowledge. What Mr. Burn has said in the preface to his '*Rome and the Campagna*,' applies with at least equal force to the case of Greece. "The importance of archaeological and topographical research continually increases with the progress of criticism, and the more mistrustful modern science renders us with regard to the primitive traditions recited by Roman historians, the more indispensable becomes the appeal to actually existing monuments and sites." If the truth of these words be admitted—and few, we imagine, would now venture to question them—it follows that the establishment of what may be called a biological station for the study of the history of the Greek nation, in the very centre of its activity, is an object which has a direct significance for, and deserves the support of, all concerned in the higher education of the country.

Enough has perhaps now been said to show that the objects of this school are definite and worthy of encouragement. It remains to speak of the conditions of its management, and of the admission and work of its students. The managing committee consists of three trustees, of a treasurer¹ and secretary, of five members elected annually by the subscribers, and of

members nominated, one by each corporate body which undertakes to subscribe at least fifty pounds a year towards the maintenance of the school. In this committee is vested the government of the school, including the power of appointing the Director. The Director's chief duties, as defined in the regulations drawn up by the committee are (1) to guide and assist the studies of students of the school, (2) to deliver at least six free public lectures at Athens during the season, (3) to report to the committee, at the end of each season, on the studies pursued by himself and by each student; and on any other matter affecting the interests of the school. To prevent misapprehension we should add that although Mr. Penrose's other engagements do not permit of his acting as Director for more than one year, it is not intended that future Directors shall hold office for less than three years. The system of yearly Directors, adopted from force of circumstances in the case of the American school, has been proved to be at least as unsatisfactory in practice as any one could have anticipated. It takes at least a year for even a trained archaeologist to qualify himself to perform efficiently all the varied duties of such a post. The students fall into three classes: (1) holders of travelling fellowships, studentships, or scholarships at any university of the United Kingdom or of the British Colonies, (2) travelling students sent out by the Royal Academy, Royal Institute of British Architects, or other similar bodies, (3) other persons who shall satisfy the managing committee that they are duly qualified to be admitted to the privileges of the school. Intending students are required to apply to the secretary,² and no student will be enrolled who does not intend to reside at least three months in Greek lands. When attached to the school a student will be ex-

¹ Mr. Walter Leaf, Old Change, London.

² At present, Mr. George Macmillan, 29, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London.

pected to pursue some definite course of study or research in a department of Hellenic studies, and to write in each season a report upon his work. Such reports will be submitted to the Director, and may afterwards at discretion be published under the sanction of the managing committee. Students will have a right to use the library of the school, and to attend all lectures given in connection with the school, free of charge. At present no arrangements are possible for their boarding and lodging, but it is hoped later on that means may be found to accommodate at least some of them at a fixed rate. Not the least important part of the work of such a school, as has been abundantly shown in the case of the French and German schools, would be that of the exploration or excavation of ancient sites. This object will be kept steadily in view by the governors of the British school, and if possible a special fund will be established for application to such purposes.

This brings us to the financial aspect of the undertaking. It was clearly pointed out in the recent report of the executive committee that although an income of four hundred pounds secured for three years seemed to justify the appointment of a Director and the opening of the school, yet this income is of a precarious nature, and is not enough to insure the efficiency of the school. The University of Oxford and the Hellenic Society have each granted the sum of one hundred pounds a year for three years, and there is a reasonable prospect of these grants being renewed. The remaining two hundred pounds a year is made up of individual subscriptions, and rather more than half of it has been guaranteed by a single donor, who conceals his generosity under the veil of anonymity. The thousand pounds of capital which remain after the building of the house at Athens, will be absorbed in the preliminary expenses of furnishing it, and purchasing the nucleus of a

library. It will be seen at once that this is not a very satisfactory state of things. Not more than two-thirds of the present income can be reckoned upon at the end of the first three years. A competent Director can hardly be found for a less salary than four hundred pounds a year, even with the house to live in. The library, if it is to serve its purpose, must be kept up by the annual purchase of new books, and archaeological books are necessarily expensive. The wear and tear of the house and furniture, the printing of reports, and other incidental expenses must be provided for. A fund for travelling and exploration is most desirable, if not indispensable. Taking all this into account, it seems obvious that whether by donations, or by annual subscriptions, an endowment of at least five hundred pounds a year beyond the present resources of the school must be raised if its work is to be efficient and fruitful. To establish such an institution, and then to starve it by an inadequate endowment would be a national disgrace in face of the achievements of the French and German schools. These are supported, and liberally supported, by their respective governments. In England and in America such institutions depend for their support upon private enterprise and liberality. The Americans, who opened their school in a hired house, are now building one of their own on a site (also presented to them by the Greek government) adjoining that of the British school. They too have had some difficulty in raising all the funds that are needed, but the scholars who are in charge of the undertaking are hopeful of ultimate success. All who feel that England ought to be at least on a level with her neighbours in the pursuit of every liberal study are bound to see to it that the British school, inaugurated under such favourable auspices, shall not stand out in contrast to her rivals as a conspicuous

failure on financial grounds alone. If funds do not fail, we may count upon a constant supply of able and zealous workers. Time was when English scholars were foremost in the work of exploration and research in Greek lands. The splendid work both of discovery and of publication performed by the Society of Dilettanti, which still flourishes among us, has done lasting honour to the name of English scholarship and munificence. It was

two Englishmen, Stuart and Revett, who first published anything worthy to be called a complete account of the monuments of ancient Athens. The topographical writings of Colonel Leake are of still undisputed authority. It should surely not be said that the country which has produced such men, and others like them happily still with us, is less zealous than of old in a field which it was among the first to cultivate.

KEEPSAKES.

EACH lover has a keepsake
For the memory of his love;
One has a note or a ribbon,
And one a curl or a glove.

But I am rich in keepsakes;
Three notes I treasure apart;
There are two, accepting my presents,
And one, declining my heart.

MY GHOST.

I.

PERHAPS I shall do well if I admit at once that my ghost belonged to this world. He was not, if I must speak strictly, supernatural, though surely not wholly natural. Even now, when I begin to think of him, my head begins to swim. I had better say merely that he was the man who wrote my books. I think that this paper is a sort of confession; or rather let me say that it is a warning to young persons of literary taste. I will hold up my ghost as a sort of scarecrow to young persons of literary taste. They should know how easy it is to slip into a shirt, which shall cling and consume blood, bones, and the effects of a virtuous education; how playfully one may insert a fox within the coat, and be forced to smile with the Spartan boy while the animal is gnawing one's waistcoat. But I do not wish to speak ill of my ghost. I dare say that it is I who was to blame, and certainly he was not a bit like a fox. Poor fellow! He is a real ghost now—or I suppose so. I must not speculate about him, for he has still this fatal power of confusing me. I will tell my story as plainly as I can.

I was born in a wealthy and smoky town, and my parents were prosperous but not dishonest. I did not care at all for hardware, in which my father had a lively and steadily increasing interest; but I derived from my mother a very deep veneration for literary persons. My mother was herself an author; and one of my earliest recollections is of her little book, which stood on a shelf above my bed in company with the works of Shakespeare and Tennyson. This was the beginning of my library. All the books on the little shelf were bound

alike and very neatly, and the name of my dear mother's volume was 'Desultory Conversations with Aunt Maria.'

I was an only child, and my mother and I were inseparable. We thought together; we read together; she saw grow up in me her own tender reverence for her brother and sister writers, the knights and dames of the goose-quill. Her invincible fears kept me from school; her glowing hopes sent me to London a law-student by profession, a lover of letters by nature and education.

I was not happy in London. I was lonely. I did not like statutes nor precedents; even leading cases left me cold. On the other hand I found no pleasure in comic operas nor in surveying life from the open jaws of the Burlington Arcade. I comforted myself by the thought, which has been dear to many young men, that I was apart from my fellows. In the bottom of my heart was a hope, faint as the last star at dawn, that I had some spark or atom of genius. Why else was I unlike the other young men? I went to the same tailor and wore the same collars. I encouraged my lonely musings and my lonely expeditions. I spent a long summer's day in peeping through a crack in a poet's palings, but I only saw the poet's gardener. I dogged the steps of an eminent man of letters, that I might hear him speak; and at last I heard him speak with conviction, with enthusiasm, and his subject was black coffee.

I was thrown back upon myself. I walked alone and thought; I sat for hours in my rooms; I began to write. At last, with wonder I beheld my work, and knew that I had written a novel. It filled me with a pleasurable

alarm. I scarcely dared to look at it; I spoke of it to nobody, not even to my mother. Such was I, and such was my life, when I ran into the arms of my ghost.

There had been a boy in our town—a boy with whom after a very short acquaintance I had been allowed to play no more. He was a vehement player at marbles, with a powerful thumb; and they said, when they told me that I must not play with him any more, that he was a story-teller. My present belief is that he was a child of a too vivid imagination—but I must not begin to speculate about him, or I shall be confused. I must tell my plain tale. The boy had vanished early from our town; it seemed to my young mind as if he had vanished from respectability. Our town always had a very high character for respectability. I had not seen the boy again until I ran into his arms in the Strand. I was walking and meditating, when round the corner came somebody and dashed himself against me. I knew him in a moment by his eyes. His eyes were always remarkable; but now they were amazing. It was a hungry face. The cheeks, if cheeks there were, were hungry, the mouth was hungry, and on the pointed chin a youthful hungry beard; but above all the eyes looked at me with such an appetite, that the familiar street seemed to fall from me and I was alone on a coral island, a succulent missionary at the native dinner-hour. I shut my eyes that I might master my emotion, and blindly there in the crowded street I swayed between two paths. Should I know him or should I not know him? Before I had made up my mind, I felt my elbows seized by sinewy hands and my name was in my ears. It was a moment full of fate for me. "Will you dine with me?" were my first words. It seemed as if any other speech would have been a mockery. "Won't I?" cried Rupert wolfishly. I have sometimes thought that the name Rupert prevented my ghost from

being accepted as a respectable boy in our town. Our town is impatient of anything fantastic; and names really are (and that is a part of my defence) very important. I have a high authority for the importance of names in fiction—but I must not wander from my story. My flesh crept at the tone of Rupert's voice, when it said "Won't I?" I made haste to lead him to a little restaurant, which was near at hand. I remember that I found a certain comfort in the thought that the cooking at the little foreign restaurant was good, and the appearance of a somewhat dilapidated visitor not unprecedented.

To this point, if I had felt pity for Rupert, I had felt no sympathy. Sympathy grew as I beheld him eat and drink. He, who had been to me a bore, changed in my eyes, as I beheld him through the delicate veil of good living, to the friend of my childhood lost no more. He was the prodigal returned; I pressed on him another plate of veal. Never have I seen meat and drink work so quick a transformation. My lean and hungry guest (not yet my ghost) seemed to expand in the odorous air. The remarkable eyes glowed; cheeks appeared—flushed cheeks; the features gained roundness and dignity. To pour good claret into my friend was to pour it into a frail rare vessel; I saw it colour him as it flowed in. I sat entranced, and when the eating was done and the drinking had come down to sips, my guest began to talk, and I was entranced indeed. All his talk was of books and of the writers of books. Literature poured out of him, now in a fine flood of quotation, now in sentence after sentence, each drop the essence of a volume. It was the talk of which I had dreamed of old in our family free-stone mansion; here was the society which my dear mother had imagined for me—a society eloquent of anecdotes of literary persons. All his talk was of literature, and not a word of black coffee, though I ordered it with a sinking of the

heart and we sipped it (it was excellent) with satisfaction.

I could not part yet from the friend of my boyhood. I pressed him to spend the rest of the evening in my rooms, and he readily consented. I remember that, when we went into the street, the full moon was shining high above the yellow lights of the street, and the wet pavement (for it had been raining) was splendid with silver and gold. Rupert burst forth into enraptured invocation of the fair goddess Diana, and only stopped when a policeman tapped him on the shoulder and somewhat urgently bade him to keep moving. I stepped nearer to my friend's side, and the policeman, murmuring something, turned away. I think that his change of manner was a tribute to the respectability of my appearance.

Rupert whistled shrilly as I led him into my sitting-room. "A Sybarite, by the living jingo!" he cried. He dropped himself with a sigh into my arm-chair, which was destined to hold him so often. "What reason is there under the sun," he said again, "why you should have a throne like this and I an inverted barrel?" It eased his soul to talk about himself. He spoke again frankly and eloquently. The lamp was shaded, and with my face unseen I sat at ease and listened to his talk. It appeared that he had been working furiously for a small publisher—"doing contemptible cinder-sifting," he said, "for the wages of an organist's monkey." I felt very sorry for him. "Had I but leisure," he cried, "but a few days of generous diet and time to breathe, I would sling out a romance which should enchant the world. My life is a romance, but I have had no time to step outside of it and study it. Time, the common property of all mankind, is denied to me."

I had pricked my ears at the word "romance." My heart beat till I could scarcely speak. But I spoke. Before I knew what I was going to say, I had told this man that I had

written a novel. What a spell he had cast on me already! I, who had scarcely confessed to myself that I was an author—I who had kept my work secret from my own mother, herself an author (author of 'Desultory Conversations with Aunt Maria')—I had confided to a person apparently disreputable that I had written my novel. My novel! Yes, it existed then, a solid pile of manuscript written very neatly by my own hand. I sigh as I recall to my mind's eye my very own novel. Rupert heard of it with delight. He took it for granted that he was to read it; he stretched out his hand for it, and I rose with trembling limbs to fetch it. My knees shook, but in my heart was a wild joy, for I thought that retreat was impossible. I was in for it now; I pulled the papers from their secret place; I laid them in Rupert's long fingers with a strange laugh.

But I could not bear to sit and see my novel read. I almost pushed my friend away. I begged him to carry it (I called it "it") home with him, and to bring it back at his leisure. A difficulty appeared. At the moment Rupert had no home; he was changing his lodgings. It appeared that the change involved some expense, and Rupert had no money. That he might have a roof and food and leisure while he read my work, I lent him two sovereigns. I would have given him more, if he had asked it. I would have given him a royal sum, could I have insured him good digestion and a tranquil mind during his hours of study, and for myself kind criticism and a happy verdict. My faith in the judgment of Rupert was strong as its growth was rapid. If only Rupert should approve!

II.

I WILL not dwell upon my anxious days and broken nights, nor on the subtle arguments with which I prepared myself for disappointment. Only a week had passed when Rupert re-

appeared in my rooms. I put out my hand without a word, and he, speechless as I, pressed into it a roll of papers. With a laugh, which I intended as a proof of ease, I spread the papers flat; the writing was not mine. I could not speak; I looked at him for an explanation. "I have done a lot of it," he said. "Of what?" "Of your novel." "But this isn't mine,"—my voice broke as I said it. "Yes, yes," he cried sharply; "it's yours; of course it's yours. I've copied it, touched it, struck a note or two, put in a high light, a nothing here and a nothing there; it's splendid; let me tell you that it's amazing."

My heart swelled; but yet I doubted. I think that I must have had a pre-sentiment. I turned over the papers and recognised with a thrill the names of my characters. Yes, the names were mine.

Rupert drew the work from my hand, and began to read. With nervous energy he pushed me into my arm-chair as he began to read my novel to me. It sounded splendid in my ears; I tried to believe it mine. Here and there came a familiar name, which I had given; I clung to those names; if the names were mine, why not the characters? My excitement grew with the reader's. They were my people, whose words I heard, whose actions passed before me. Rupert arrived at a thrilling scene of love; he pranced about, declaiming; I murmured applause. Yes, yes, my novel was underneath it somewhere; in a sense it was certainly mine; there could not be a house without a foundation. I was intoxicated with a strange triumph; I could not speak my thanks, but I wrung his hand and lent him two more sovereigns.

A week later he brought me another instalment, and each week more till the whole was done. While he worked with a sort of fury, I acquired a habit (I see it clearly now) of believing that he was copying for me. How quickly it was finished! It was clear that no

man could have composed a novel in so short a time. It was finished; and Rupert stood opposite to me—glaring. He brought his lean fist down on the last page with a bang, and glared at me across my table. "There's your novel," he said with unnecessary emphasis. Conscience leapt up in me; it had been under a soothing influence for weeks past, but now it leapt up in a moment. "It's not mine," I said—"at least I don't see how it can be mine—at least, it must be more yours than mine."

He shook a long lean finger at me. "Tell me," he said, transfixing me with his eye, "tell me how it could have been without you. Tell me that!"

These were just the words (I see it now) to push my conscience down again. I don't know if he referred to the occasional sovereigns, or to my original work; but he seemed to give a firm soft push to my conscience, and it lay flat. Without me the book would not have been. I was the author—the fundamental author—the author below the author. "And now for a publisher!" cried my ghost. "Your publisher!" I suggested with dry lips. "My publisher," he said, "is a thing of shreds and patches, of paste and scissors. He wouldn't look at it; and, if he looked, he would not understand it. He has even corrected the hack-work which I have done for him, and, by the living jingo, he might correct this! And this, let me tell you, is no slight thing. It is a masterpiece. It is the book of the year—of the century. It is amazing. It must be introduced, and to an enraptured public, by a leading firm."

I found myself blushing and glowing at his praises of the book. Such is the force of self-persuasion. I humbly submit that a man of average reasoning power may persuade himself in this subtle age of ours not only that black is white, but even that to call it black is the grossest hypocrisy.

"And will you take it to a publisher?" I asked

"In this coat?" asked he with scorn.

It was a bad coat, but no worse than his boots. Some of the ink, which he had borrowed for the making of my book, had been better employed in blacking the seams of that coat. "You must take your novel," he said; "you don't know the value of your appearance; you do look so d——d respectable."

I started at the epithet and he laughed wildly. "They will think you've come with a pocket full of sermons," he said, "or of Meditations of a Canon for private circulation only—a sort of revolving mitrail-leuse, by jingo!" He laughed enormously at his idea, but I confess that I could not join in the mirth.

"Put on your very best coat," he said, "pick out a very smart hansom and go down yourself to Messrs. —." He named a firm of publishers, of whom my dear mother had often spoken to me with bated breath. I wondered if I should be brave enough to go. "I may mention your name?" I asked.

"No!" he cried out, "no! It's your novel. Will you understand that but for you it never could have been written, and but for you it never could be published? If it isn't yours, whose on this dedal earth is it?"

I could not answer; he had a magnetic influence over me; I could only jump. He took leave of me, but almost instantly returned to say that he had been much struck by the appearance of my servant, and to suggest that I should send him with the manuscript instead of going myself. I accepted this idea with avidity.

Early in the next morning I sent my servant to the publishers with a very courteous note and the novel. I did not exactly say that the novel was mine; at least, I did not say that I had written it; I merely said that I sent it by my servant. It was not long before I received an answer. I read with a gasp for air that they were inclined to publish the novel.

They raised the question of terms, which filled me with new doubts. I telegraphed for Rupert, who amazed me by his views of remuneration. Was it possible that I had written a book which was worth—or rather was it possible that I was in some sort the author, or underlying author, of a book which was worth so much to any mortal? Rupert laughed at my doubts. He said that the publishers would think nothing of it, if I did not ask a thumping price. "That will fetch 'em," said he; "that, and your sending your manuscript by a servant. Hire a brougham when you go to see them!" Thus wildly and cynically, I am sure, did Rupert speak. He had found his own deplorable coat and bearing so weak in procuring attention, that he took pleasure, I think, in exaggerating the importance of an appearance of respectability.

The publishers showed no alarm at Rupert's terms, which I submitted with a quaking heart. They paid a nice sum down, and promised a share of future gains. I was adamant about the money. I would not touch a penny of it. I forced it all upon Rupert, and my conscience felt better.

"Society with the big S, mysterious fluid expanding and contracting, rejecting the occasional gnat and swallowing daily camels with a smile—Society, bored and boring, rigid and shapeless, exclusive and vulgar, petty and illimitable, a puddle and a sea—" The above is to be found in one of my novels, and I may say without self-praise that it seems to me rather neat. "This enormous machine," as it is further described, "for the manufacture of amusements, turning out, with creaks and groans innumerable, a million monotonous articles for one comparative novelty"—this Society remained indifferent to my existence, even after the conspicuous success of my first novel. It appears that the fashionable world does not trouble itself so much about literary persons as works of fiction had led me to expect. I was a literary lion, or a cub

at least, but I was not petted by Countesses. A Countess did ask me to an evening party, but it was thought likely that her son would contest our prosperous respectable provincial town.

I was more relieved than vexed by the indifference of fashionable ladies. I am naturally shy, and I found much greater pleasure in the more quiet drawing-rooms of the literary people, for whose companionship my mother and I had sighed in the well-built free-stone mansion of my childhood's days. Men and women of letters were very kind to me and spoke of my book and gave me tea and made me feel that I was somebody, an artist, one of themselves. I purred and forgot my doubts. How wonderful is the acquisition of habits! In a few weeks I was purring at the praises of my book with a mind at ease. I bowed, smiled and murmured, as if no Rupert were in the world. I murmured, because I did not know what to say. People asked me questions about my people's motives, but I found that they were content with a sort of slow smile by way of answer. They would smile too, and nod, as if they understood. I fear that they did not find me brilliant, and thought that I kept my best things for my book. I thought so too. I acquired the habit of thinking that I had a great many ideas, which as a literary man I must not waste. I think that my new friends admired my reserve; and then I listened so well. I was a capital listener; I felt myself popular; I was happy. My novel was a real success. I mean that more money began to come in and that really new editions appeared. I was firm as a rock about the money; I sent every penny to Rupert.

III.

AMONG the new friends whom my reputation had brought me were a charming American couple, who like myself were little lions of the day. They were smart in both the English

and the American sense of the word. Mr. Waldron had an ancestor who had come over to New England in the Mayflower, and it was by no means certain that he had not another who had come over to Old England with the Conqueror. Mrs. Waldron was, I think, very pretty, and had studied Greek and written a novel of Society. They were charming people, and, though I was never sure that they did not laugh at me in their quiet way, I liked them very much.

One lovely summer evening I was sitting in the Park with the Waldrons. He was moralising on the sumptuous and impressive show, the multitude of well-groomed men and horses, the gloss and the stateliness; and she was looking here and there with the liveliest interest, and asking more questions than I could answer. Impatient perhaps at my tardiness she passed from asking questions to fanciful comments on crowds. The creeping mass of strangers on foot, the pacing crowd of strangers on horseback, aroused in her, she declared with pretty emphasis, an extraordinary feeling of loneliness. "I feel," she said, "as if I might raise my eyes and see sliding through the throng my double—my *doppelgänger* as the Germans say—my other self. Who is that? There! That man looking this way? Why, he is perfectly splendid."

I started at the change in her voice; I looked where she looked—and lo! high on a highly-polished horse, splendid in the slanting rays of the sun, shining like a millionaire, there was my ghost. Under the brim of his glossy hat were waves of that hair which I had known as inelegant rat-tails; the trousers on his thin legs were cut and strapped like an emperor's; in his boots, to my excited fancy, all London seemed to be reflected. His remarkable eyes were fixed on mine, and I could not but obey their summons. I leaped to the rails. "Ha!" he whispered, bending from the saddle till his face was close to mine; "do they take me for some-

body—an Arab chief, a Romeo *redivivus*, a prince of Como?" "Can you afford——?" I stammered. "I have my hour," he answered, and touching his proud beast with his heel he cantered up the Row. He was magnificent in my eyes; but I heard a young man at my elbow ask his friend, "What the deuce is it?" And his friend answered, "Hairdresser, or assassin." There must have been some flaw in Rupert's splendour which I could not detect.

From that day I began to be haunted by my ghost. At night I started from my dreams and heard the cantering of his horse as it died away in the distance. I fancied that he would canter over my grave. I dreamed of a vampire-Rupert stealing to my bedside, and I felt my blood drawn from me and my body grow wrinkled and limp. Was not this to be haunted—to be haunted by a ghost indeed? It was a positive relief when one evening, after long walking of the streets in hopes of fatigue, I found my ghost apparently lifeless in my bed. The young doctor, who attended him, told me that Rupert had been flung on his head by the polished horse; that he had given my address and fainted. I nursed him with entire devotion. I had grown so fanciful and superstitious that I felt as if I were nursing myself. My life seemed one with his. I called in the first of doctors, that he might consult with the young practitioner who had picked up my friend in the street. I hired the best of nurses and did more than half of her work. I spared no expense. As Rupert grew stronger both doctors, with many compliments on my devotion—compliments which I did not deserve—recommended change of air and scene and life. A friend of my father wished to let his yacht, and I took it for a month with the power to take it for a longer time. With jealous care I conveyed the sick man on board, and we sailed for the Mediterranean.

Rupert got well while I was sick. I bore my discomfort with patience, but at times I could not resist the horrible suspicion that he was growing strong at my expense. I felt him drain my life-blood. It was a baseless fancy, and I only mention it to show how weak and nervous he had made me. He haunted me more weirdly than before. Listless I lay on deck, above the summer sea, and thought only of him. It was so strange. This man was my ghost. I had always supposed that an artist's ghost brought him wealth. It might be wrong to start a ghost, but I had always thought that it was lucrative. My ghost would land me in the work-house. The cost of his illness had been very great; the cost of this yacht, in which we vaguely drifted month after month, was almost ruinous. There was something irrational, or so it seemed to my poor sick brain, in keeping a ghost and being ruined by him.

One morning I raised my eyes and saw Rupert standing over me. He was thin but vigorous. "Ha, ha!" he cried, "let us go home and work. I am ravenous for work, and my fingers grow crooked for the pen. Take me over the wine-dark sea to your patent writing-table." I agreed, but without enthusiasm. I bent all my energies to making strong a single purpose; I determined that this time Rupert should write his own book and not mine. One day I summoned all my strength and said that the new book should be his. "Are you mad?" he cried at me; "you have made a name and you won't use it? You have the ball at your foot and you won't kick it—the repeating-rifle in your hand and you won't make a dozen hits where you have made one!" It ended by my yielding. We talked over the new novel; I made my notes, and he thrust them into his breast. I feel sure now that those notes were a mere sedative for my conscience, that I had no expectation of his using them. He did not use them.

There was some relief in being rid of that consuming yacht. I dared not write to my father for more money, and so I had to borrow the means of paying for my rolling holiday at sea. I was glad to stand erect on the firm earth once more; but Rupert was still with me. He set to work at the novel with such zeal that I began to be fearful of a relapse. He was much annoyed by my anxiety; he declared that I fluttered about him like a hen with one chick; he roared with laughter at the notion that he was my ugly duckling (certainly he was the better sailor), and that I should find that I had hatched a swan. Swans sing before they die, I thought; I was in a twitter lest he should die in my rooms. It would have been in a certain sense a relief, but I should never have got over it—never. He called me “Mammy Dorking,” and seemed to think it amazingly funny. I never thought that humour was Rupert’s strong point.

I secretly sent for the doctor, who declared that we both suffered from cerebral excitement, that we worked too hard. It was like the voice of conscience; I could not persuade myself that I was working at all. The doctor insisted on my taking Rupert for a daily walk. I was now so nervous that the idea of being seen with him in the street made me shake all over. I could not persuade myself that my acquaintances would not see the strange bond between us—that he would not be recognised as my ghost, my double-goer, or at least something weird and impossible. Rupert was impossible, but a fact.

I used to convey Rupert in a cab to Battersea Park, and there walk him about for an hour. He enjoyed it immensely, but I suffered every minute. And so the winter dragged itself sluggishly away and spring came again, bringing a fresh store of activity to my ghost and fresh tremors to me; and one fair morning in Battersea Park we came face to face with my American friends, the Waldrons. They

were doing the London parks. What will not enterprising Americans do? I know that I turned pale; but the charming Mrs. Waldron greeted me with delight. “And do introduce your friend,” she said with an emphatic whisper. I murmured something, and in another minute we were all walking together—Waldron and I, and before us the charming lady with my ghost; and my ghost was talking brilliantly, paradoxically, with easy compliment. To my disordered fancy it seemed that my ghost was flirting with my friend’s wife.

“But he is perfectly charming,” she said to me with intense conviction and scarcely dropping her voice; “he is a real character; I am sure you are studying him, and will put him in your book.”

I hope that I did not cry out. Rupert in my book! The idea was too monstrous. My book was in him—somewhere.

IV.

AND the book came out in due time. It was advertised well, and with a peculiar thrill I saw my name on the backs of many newspapers. I found little pleasure in it, but Rupert was delighted. The former novel was now nothing in his eyes, but this was amazing. This was what a novel ought to be! I confess that I was no judge of its merits. I studied it diligently, but I could not understand its characters; I wondered why they did this or that—or why they did not do this or that, for they did not do much. Rupert said that it was a novel rather of character than of incident. It bothered me a good deal, for friendly people would ask me questions about the heroine’s motives, and I never could understand the heroine; indeed I don’t know now whether she was the villain or the good woman of the book. I was obliged to do a great deal of smiling wisely and nodding my head, and I was very tired of it. I was sick of novel-writing—or rather, I was sick of being a novelist.

Most of the critics expressed disappointment. They said that I had not fulfilled the promise of my first work ; and, rather oddly I think, I felt a good deal of chagrin at not fulfilling the promise of my first work. They said that the story was less interesting, and that the analysis of character was too subtle. I think that they conveyed to the public the idea that the novel was more meritorious than amusing, and I fear that they checked the sale. My publisher looked solemn. I did not go to see him, but he came to see me. He had paid a good price for the book. He said bluntly that the book was "a d—d sight too clever," and that "girls want something lively to read, with a captain in it"—that "they don't care a hang for all this picking to pieces of a fellow's state of mind when he's handing the muffins." He was very blunt, and I was a good deal discouraged. I could not bear to think that he might lose money by my work. That possibility made my conscience uneasy. Indeed my conscience was absurdly sensitive ; for it kept on telling me on the one side that the book was not mine, and on the other that the publisher would lose money by my book. Now the book was either mine or not mine—but if I go into this I shall get confused again. Yet my conscience would not be quieted ; and so I looked about anxiously for Rupert. I knew that Rupert was subtle ("supersubtle" one of the reviewers said—or rather he said that I was supersubtle—but it comes to the same thing, I suppose). I wanted to find Rupert, and to put the case of conscience to him. I even thought of suggesting a small return of money, if the book were not selling well.

I looked about for my friend, but I could not find him. My ghost had vanished into thin air. Of course I had transferred to him every penny of my good publisher's money, and I had not seen him since the transfer. I asked again and again at his humble lodgings, and could get no news of

him. I haunted the Park, scanning the proud horsemen nervously, but this time the money had not gone into horseflesh and patent leather boots. It had taken a wider flight ; it had made itself wings and carried my Rupert, like Icarus, over the sea. Soon it swept me, too, off my feet, and plunged me into fresh expenditure.

I was sitting solitary in my room and thinking of my ghost, when a telegram came from Paris. It came from my friend Waldron, who had accompanied his charming wife to the dress-makers and theatres of that vivacious city. "Come if you can," I read, "we want to consult you about your friend R." The message fell from my hand, and I sat staring. Good heavens ! Was it possible ? I will not confess the wild fancies which possessed me. If the money which I had earned, or, to put it more accurately, which had been paid to me, had enabled Rupert to follow my charming friend abroad ! But I will not further indicate the awful doubts which beset me. I must have been in a very distressing state to have harboured such a notion for a moment. I blush as I write. It is enough to say that I started for Paris that evening. On the next morning I hurried with beating heart to the apartment of my friends. Both Mr. and Mrs. Waldron rose to meet me ; even the man showed a certain eagerness ; I gazed from one to the other with relief, but with anxiety. It was the lady who did most of the talking. The story was soon told. As soon as he had the money in his pocket, Rupert had flown to Paris and renewed his acquaintance with the Waldrons. "I must say that he is *very* fascinating," Mrs. Waldron said, "and Effie succumbed at once." Effie ! It appeared that a young cousin of Mrs. Waldron, a New England girl educated in a Parisian convent, very simple of nature and knowing nothing of the world, had come from her cloister-school to stay with her relations. To

her romantic eyes Rupert had arisen like a star, brilliant, persuasive, irresistible. He on his side had fallen suddenly into the abyss of love. Before my good friends had finished their first smiles at this strange mutual attraction, my fiery ghost had swept away their innocent charge. She departed to visit another cousin in Florence. On the same day Rupert had vanished. "They are married," said Mr. Waldron grimly, "fast as churches or embassies can tie the knot."

I was overwhelmed by a feeling of guilt. I sank into a chair with a groan. "It is too late to make a fuss," said Waldron. "What have I done?" cried I wildly. "Nothing," said Waldron rather crossly; "but we want you to do something. We want you to tell us all about him." "But I know nothing about him." "You know nothing about him, and you introduced him to us!" I shuddered; I seemed a criminal in my own eyes. "You know, George," said Mrs. Waldron to her husband, "that I insisted on his being presented to me. Nobody blames you," she added to me: "we only want to know if your friend is the sort of man to marry." "Oh no," said I; "I think not—how could he be? He was not a good boy in our town, and I don't know what he has done since. How could he afford to be married?" "He had piles of money," said Mr. Waldron, grimly. "What could I say? It was the price of my second novel on which my ghost had married. My ghost had married! How could he be 'the sort of man to marry'?" What was he? My head was swimming.

I think that my distress must have touched the hearts of those good people. "I will show you Effie's letter," said she; "it is full of contrition and devotion; she is a dear little thing. I do hope he will be good to her." I read that artless letter with tears smarting in my eyes. It was like the good-bye of a girl who had been borne away by a demon-lover—and it was I who had supplied the

demon-lover with the necessary funds. I felt like Mephistopheles in the play. Inaction was impossible. I must see Rupert, reason with him, plead for her. "Give me their address in Florence," I said, with unwonted decision.

I found them in the Boboli Gardens. I climbed a climbing alley dark for all the sunshine with its ilex gloom, where here and there a marble nymph or faun showed faint and fair; I came out on a sunny slope and I saw her among the daisies. It was my first sight of her and my heart stood still. At her feet lay Rupert looking away from her towards the city of flowers. It restored me to myself and to my annoyance to hear him spouting poetry. Could he keep a wife on poetry? I, who had been from infancy a votary of the Muse, felt for a moment a hatred of these jiggling or sonorous measures. Could he buy his wife's bonnets with such flimsy notes?

Mrs. Rupert greeted me very kindly, and we all walked together to their lodgings. There, with a charming delicacy, she withdrew, that she might show without words that she would not come between her husband and his friends. Then I attacked Rupert, but I felt that my attack was vain. I had meant to be impressive, but I felt myself like a scolding nurse. He met me with mockery and brisk counter-charge.

"Prosaic animal," he said, "am I never to carp a day *insouciant* but you must come, croak, croak, croak, a bull-frog into my paradise? A fice for your butchers and bakers! We breakfast off the Pitti pictures; we lunch where you found us, marplot, off daisies and sunshine; our supper is the Perseus by moonlight. Take home your copy-book wisdom and your Cook's ticket; for I must have my hour."

He always wanted his hour.

I dined with the Ruperts at an expensive *café*, or rather they dined with me; and I saw my ghost eat ravenously, for all his talk of feeding on sun and moon.

The next morning I found her alone. She was leaning at her window and looking down on to a small *loggia* with a fountain-basin like a shell, a weather-stained statue musing silently, and a few clothes a-drying. She turned to me with her sweet innocent air, her modest welcome. My heart was full of fear for her and the heavy sense of responsibility. But for me she would be free. But for me she had not been in the shadow of this fear. To be the wife of my ghost! This round-eyed lovely child was my ghost's wife. Before I went away I wrote my London address for her special keeping, and I implored her to let me know at once if at any time she wanted help of any sort. I could see that she was surprised by my vehemence.

V.

I RETURNED to London and began to practise a rigid economy. My foreign travel had prevented me from regaining that sound financial position which had been impaired by my ghost's illness and subsequent yachting-voyage. I felt the want of money and I was possessed by the presentiment of coming calls upon my purse. I was determined to be in a position to help when that poor girl should be in want of money. I would help her at any cost.

No long time passed before I was visited by Rupert. They had left Florence; they could not live for ever even on Florentine air. Rupert looked hungry again, and peremptorily demanded work. "Work for yourself this time!" I said. "No," he answered, "that is out of the question now." "Why?" I asked. "Good heavens, man," he cried with sudden wrath, "don't you know that I am married?" I nodded, for I could not speak. "And you ask me to sacrifice her to your fantastic scruples!" "No—oh no," I said feebly. "Can't you understand that as a married man I must neglect no advantage? It would

be criminal in me not to use your name. You are my vein, and I must work you out."

I was my ghost's vein! There was no more to be said. He set to work with extraordinary diligence at my third novel. He wrote it in my rooms; he said that he could not write in his lodgings, that his wife was a disturbing element. He was a disturbing element to me. I could not sit still and see him writing at my table, with my pens and my ink—writing the book which ought to have been mine. I was driven to the streets; I wandered like an unquiet spirit, a ghost driven out by a ghost. One day, when I had left him composing with excessive care, I suddenly made up my mind to go and see his wife. She tried hard to be cheerful; but I saw that she was not happy and I felt that I—I who would do anything to help her—had caused her unhappiness. With broken words, with false descriptions of the childhood friendship of my ghost and me, I persuaded her to take some money from me as a loan. She promised with a divine simplicity to keep it from her husband. Her gratitude made me cry, and I had to go away in a hurry.

When my third novel was ready, I had a very disagreeable shock. My publisher would not take it. My pride was wounded. It is an extraordinary fact that I felt pique. It seemed that, after all, I had the vanity of an author: it was mine to know the pains but not the pleasures of authorship. Another publisher accepted the book but on less imposing terms. I had hoped for a good sum down, which would have kept my ghost and his wife for a year; but perhaps it was well that I had no big cheque to hand to Rupert, for he might have been in Japan or Central Africa before I had had time to miss him. Touch him with a cheque and he shot into space, an irresponsible electric force, a spark, a current, a wandering voice. I sometimes felt that he was always at the

other end of a telephone; or I started up in bed with a voice from the Himalayas in my ears, or from the Mountains of the Moon, perhaps. He was on my nerves to an alarming extent.

The critics threw cold water on my third novel, and, when I tried to read it, I could not blame them. I was hurt by their remarks, but I confessed to myself that they were right. I don't believe that they understood it; I am sure that I did not. It seemed strange to me that Rupert, pen in hand, should be so indifferent to movement, to incident. His life was sensational, and his fiction uneventful. On the other hand I have heard that sensational writers, whose works are full of edges of cliff and midnight passages, are, many of them at least, elderly fathers of families who ride in omnibuses for safety, or excellent mothers of families, who abandon with delight the agonising pen for the friendly gossip of the Dorcas meeting. Such are the contradictions of authors, who seem to me to lead a double life, each two persons in one skin. But if Rupert was two, then there were three of us. When I arrived at that thought I was so troubled and confused that I abandoned with terror all speculations on the intricate nature of my ghost.

If the critics looked askance at my novel the public would not look at it from any angle. I was obliged to explain to Rupert that my new novel was likely to produce very little money. He at once attacked me as if it were my fault. I stared at him in amazement. He was full of fiery scorn—scorn of the world and of me. "I had rather," he said, "break stones than write for such a race of dunderheads. Do you expect your people to be labelled 'This is the villain,' 'This is the virtuous hero'?" Are your brute ears to be tickled by the same old tune squeaked through the triple pipe of the slow-circulating dropsical library! To display the hidden springs of action, the fine secrets of humanity for such a public!

Oh! why was I not born a Frenchman?"

I was dumb and offended. I could not tell why Rupert was not born a Frenchman. I wished that he had been the *reculant* of some member of the French Academy. And yet had he been so, I should not have been his—I hardly know what to call myself) and I might never have met her, who has exalted my view of womanhood and of the fair possibilities of human life. I have sinned, I suppose; I am sure that I have suffered. I would not have it otherwise.

Perhaps Rupert repented of his invective against me and the sturdy Saxon race. He did not apologise, but he invited me with a fine show of affection to be godfather to his boy. I accepted the charge without levity and with a full sense of the responsibility of my position. She thanked me; I think that she understood my feeling.

Rupert was restless. I think that he missed the touch of the cheque, which would have shot him through the universe. He rebelled against the perversity of critics and readers; he shouted to me from a few feet away that my novel was a masterpiece of fine analysis, and that there were bits of it which Shakespeare could not have written. "Shakespeare," he declared to me one day, bounding from my own arm-chair, "was strong but not *fin*." I would not argue with him, and he went away with a snort and banged the door behind him. Presently he flung himself with ardour into the making of my fourth novel. It was my last; I thank Heaven that it was my last; there will never be another. As he wrote he grew radiant. If the last work had bits which Shakespeare could not have written, of the present work he could not have written a single passage. "It is a marvellous study," he said; "there has been no creation like it since that of the world." "Is it very subtle?" I asked with anxiety. "Subtle!" he cried, "it is subtle, subtle—subtle as the old serpent." I

sighed; I had small hopes of it; I was shocked, too, by his exaggerated talk. He told me that he had been full of the characters of this book while he was writing the last. Perhaps he had got them mixed a little, and that explained the fact that nobody could understand the people in my third novel. I did not say this to him; his explosions made me nervous.

I will not write of anything which happened before the completion of my fourth novel. It was finished, and it journeyed up and down Paternoster Row and found no resting-place. At last, terrified by Rupert's increasing excitement, I secretly conveyed a sum of money to my original publisher and published my book at my own expense. It fell flat. If there be anything which falls flatter than the pancake, it fell flat as that. I cannot bear to linger on that time, nor on that book. I felt that I was a failure, and I read it in the eyes of my acquaintances. They did not speak of my novel. Nobody seemed to be aware that an important work of fiction had appeared. I doubt if anybody ever read it to the end. I did not. It was like a nightmare to me. It seemed to me like a long dissection of a single character, and this single character seemed to contain all the contradictions of our intricate humanity. I would have asked Rupert to explain my novel to me, but I had not the heart. I dreaded his explosions; I feared the effect of this disappointment; I could hold out no hope of money. It had been a grave expense to me.

VI.

It was hard to prophesy about my ghost. I had dreaded explosions of wrath; he came with explosions of laughter. I heard him laughing as he came up stairs, and he was laughing still when he came into my room, dropped into my easy-chair, and held out the first edition of a popular even-

ing paper. I took the paper without interest, and saw a letter signed with my ghost's name. The name of my book was at the top of the letter. How can I write of the contents of that letter? I feel the same cold shudder now, the growing horror with which I stared at the printed page. The letter contained a violent attack upon my novel for impropriety. "What do you mean?" I asked. "I mean to start the sale," he said with triumph. "And my reputation?" I gasped. "Reputation!" he cried out, and dissolved into a torrent of laughter. "It was an inspiration," he said when he could speak; "it came to me like a flash, the peculiar advantage of our partnership. As a writer of fiction I do the books; as a journalist I criticise them. Here is my own name put honestly and frankly, as a Briton's name should be, to my outspoken denunciation of your Frenchy and pernicious novel." "My novel!" I said in my bitterness. A steady and respectable life had ended in my being attacked in a wide-read journal for impropriety. And I had published the improper novel at my own expense, and for the sake of this man who had attacked me!

On the afternoon of the following day a lady, closely veiled, was shown into my room. It was my mother. When I saw her face it was white with horror. She had never expected that her boy, son of the author of the blameless 'Conversations with Aunt Maria,' would be attacked for impropriety. What would our native town say? What were they saying now? Had the local papers yet copied the awful letter of my appalling ghost? Ah me! In that hour, kneeling with my head upon my mother's black silk dress, I felt for the first time the full punishment of my first error. Gaily had I spread the painted wings of authorship to the flattering airs of insincerity! How was I punished now! I was accused of having written an improper novel.

My mother had never liked my

books, though she had been proud of my success and sympathised with my interest in literary society. She had told me from the first that they were not the sort of books which she had looked for from me. I had not looked for them from myself. But at least they had been proper. Before my mother left me to return to the respectable town which was blushing now for me, I had promised her to withdraw my novel from circulation.

Strictly speaking, there was no circulation from which to withdraw my novel. I wrote a letter, short and not without dignity, to the offending evening paper. I entirely denied that my book was improper; I wrote (and this was strictly true) that if there was any impropriety in the book I had failed to understand it. I felt a faint pleasure in the midst of my shame when I penned this piece of literature, which was wholly my own. It was printed in the next day's journal, and there was a reference to it in one of the editorial paragraphs. I have them still, the letter and the paragraph. Then with stern resolution I wrote to my publishers and commanded them to destroy the whole edition; and I sent a brief note to my ghost and told him what I had done. He arrived in a whirlwind of passion. He had written a second letter for the paper in answer to my letter of denial; he had supposed that I was only "keeping up the game." "Keeping up the game" was his expression. He declared that I had ruined him. "You," he cried, "have ruined me—you, who are the godfather of my helpless child!" I will do anything for *him*," I said. "You will kill him," he said with frenzy; "he has been ill since your last visit; you put the evil eye upon him. Yes, by the living jingo, you have the evil eye! That is the secret of all." He stood pointing at me with his long skinny fingers, denouncing, terrific, like an archangel for sublimity. I shrank before him. Then, with a snort of scorn, he turned on his heel and went

with long strides from the room, from the house, and from the country.

Had I the evil eye? I was so nervous that I feared lest my casual glance might work a wholesale ruin. I passed the cat upon the stairs and dared not look behind lest I should see her in convulsions. The cream was sour on my breakfast-table; I had looked into the jug. As for Mrs. Rupert and her babe, should I go to them or should I not? My fatal eye, worse than a thousand teething, might wring my godchild as perhaps it had wrung the cat. I reasoned with myself and went. They might be starving. Days had passed since Rupert had flung himself from my rooms; I feared that he had but little money; I had heard nothing of him—nothing of her.

I went to her with a beating heart. I dared not look at her as I shook her hand; I dared not ask to see the boy. But somehow, when she began to speak in her quiet, grave way, my morbid fancies slipped away from me. I found myself looking at her, and she brought her tiny boy and placed him on my knees. I looked at them with pity. She tried to be brave, but the infantine roundness of her face made its sorrow the more sad to me, and the baby's cheerfulness was more pathetic still. My ghost had vanished. He had not been at home since I had seen him last. Did ever man, since the world began, hang round his neck a ghost like this? I could not doubt that, light as a phantom, he had glided away from his innocent wife and child.

I lent Mrs. Rupert all the money which I could spare. I think that she would not have taken it for herself, but she was in great fear for her child. She told me that she had seen Mrs. Waldron in the street and had not dared to speak to her. I saw the light of hope in that direction, and went in search of the Waldrons. They had but just arrived in London after a long tour in the East, and they met

me, before I could speak upon the subject, with inquiries about their poor young cousin. With shame I told them of my friend's disappearance; and they promised to go to her at once, to comfort her, to take charge of her and of the baby.

This was a great relief to me, for it left me free to hunt my ghost. Whither had he fled? I advertised in the papers; I sought him in all sorts of places; I employed detectives. I learned nothing until, when a month had gone, I received a letter from New York. Here is the letter:

"You know," he wrote, "how the sea sets me up. I stepped ashore a new man. I am a new man in a new world and capable of anything. Here the smoke does not lie sluggish along the horizon, but goes straight up to heaven and is lost there. That's what's the matter with me! Up I go; I can't be held; I am on the boom, as they say here. You never saw such a clean country. Europe is beastly dirty. In this air you need not wash, but yet the houses are full of baths. I go West to-morrow to make a fortune with never a pen in my luggage. I mean to live, and not write about life any more. When I think how I have drugged with inky fingers, I wonder at my patience. I have been a fool for my pains. Now I have the world before me, a new world. I shall buy a pickaxe and an ass and go prospecting for silver. Dreams of silver asleep in the immemorial mountains haunt my moonlit slumbers. I am the Endymion of miners. I shall be content with nothing less than a stirring life and a vast fortune to follow. That is how I will sup ere night come. I wish that you were with me, or would send me a hundred pounds. I would quadruple it for you in no time, and meanwhile it would be of use to me for unconsidered trifles. Send it to me at the Union Bank, Chicago, which will be my first halting-place. To-morrow I begin my triumphant journey to the mountains of the moon. Don't worry about me. Addio!

"Yours ever,
"RUPERT."

I turned the letter over and over. I could not believe that there was no postscript, no mention of his wife and child. "A new man" quotha? Was he a new man with no old ties? Had he clean forgotten, in his clean world, that he had left a wife and son behind him? I was excited as never before. Not all the baths in New York, it

seemed to me, could wash some immigrants from the dirty actions which they had left behind them in Europe. I was frightened at the warmth of my anger, but rather pleased with it too. I would not falter nor delay. I wrote to Mrs. Waldron and told her that I was going to pursue Rupert; that I trusted her, as indeed I did trust her, to take care of the helpless mother and son, till I returned with him. I borrowed some money for my necessary expenses, and started on the track of my ghost.

VII.

I FOLLOWED my ghost across the long rolling waves of the Atlantic. I, too, was a new man in a new world, not only renovated by revolutionary internal changes but capable of a stronger purpose than I had ever possessed before. I meant to bring back my ghost, dead or alive.

I did not find it so hard as I had expected to learn something of Rupert. They remembered him at his hotel in New York: he owed a trifle to one of the waiters, and I paid the waiter. They remembered him at the barber's shop: he owed for three days' shaving, and I paid the barber's bill. I was referred to a man powerful in railroads, and he remembered Rupert. He had been struck by my ghost's large and free notions of speculative expenditure; he had found him "very enterprising for an Englishman;" he had given him a free pass to Chicago, had "chalked his hat," he said.

I started for Chicago, and as soon as I had arrived and had washed myself, I went to the bank. They remembered him at the bank. They had been very much impressed by him as a probable capitalist, a man of large ideas, who was going West with his head on, and seeking the best investments for his fortune. A loquacious director spoke to me with enthusiasm of Rupert and congratulated me on my friend. He had asked him to dinner, and assured me that he had

had an enormous success with the most fashionable *belles*. My friend had expected to find money at the bank for him (he had really expected to find that hundred pounds of mine); he had expressed amazement at finding neither cash nor letter; he had been prevailed upon to accept a loan from the loquacious banker as he was in a hurry to go on to Milwaukee. I felt myself obliged to say that I was taking Rupert's money to him, and to repay with thanks the sum which he had borrowed.

To Milwaukee! "What in thunder could he want in Milwaukee?" the good banker asked; and I could not answer. The banker evidently credited Rupert with some deep design, and thought that he must have had private information of a coming local boom, for in Chicago they had a poor opinion of Milwaukee. I was very discreet and kept my opinion to myself; but when I heard that they brewed a great deal of lager beer in Milwaukee I thought that my ghost had gone there to see what it was like.

I went at the best possible speed to Milwaukee. It seemed to be a prosperous but rather quiet city; it was not difficult to explore, for it was symmetrical and rectangular as other new cities of America. I could not help looking on it as rather new, though in Wisconsin they seemed to think it venerable. I went to all the hotels and could hear nothing of Rupert; I visited the banks without success. I began to think (I said nothing of this growing intention) of making inquiries at the prisons. I was disheartened. Had he vanished again?

There is a quiet corner in Milwaukee; the day was the most quiet of the year, the hour the most quiet of the day—it was the hour of the mid-day meal. I was out of heart and had no appetite. I wandered down to the waterside and came upon that quiet corner. There was a little wooden quay at the foot of one of those immensely high barns, which are called grain elevators in that country. This tall gaunt building

threw a sharply defined shadow across the little quay; the sun was burning in a cloudless sky; there was complete stillness in the place. There was only one person in sight, and he was a tramp. He had taken off his coat and boots and I saw the big toe of his right foot standing up through his sock. He sat in the shade with his back against the barn and a bottle of the local lager beer beside him. I drew near with my heart in my mouth; he looked up and knew me; he was my ghost.

He moved his boots to the other side of him, and patted the boards of the little quay as if he would invite me to sit beside him in the grateful shade. "I have found you," I said. He nodded and smiled. "Why did you go away like that?" I asked with some emotion. "Like what?" he asked smiling. "I'll be hanged if I didn't go off like a tourist. That's what bored me. Oh, that I had wings!"—"Why did you go?" I broke out angrily. "I couldn't stand my wife's sewing-machine," he said; "it got so on my nerves." "Your wife!" I exclaimed. "Then you have not forgotten that you have a wife!" "Dear little woman!" he said, drawing the cork from his beer-bottle. "She is as nice as any one can be who has no imagination. Have you observed that women as a rule have no imagination?" "D— women as a rule!" cried I. I mention this to show how much moved I was. I think that it was the first time in my life that I made use of an oath. "Naughty man!" said he, laughing. "Here is her health," he said in a moment, and he held up the bottle before he poured the clear amber liquid down his throat. "Her health!" I said in my bitterness, and could say no more. "I shall make her a sort of queen," he said, "an empress of the golden ears." He put back his hand and rapped the wooden wall behind him. "This land," said he, "can feed the world with corn. I shall go rather deep into corn. There are fortunes in it."

I felt that I could not talk to him any more until I had had time to think. I asked for his address and mentioned that I had a little money for him. Smiling like a millionaire he informed me that he had no address at present, having left his lodgings the day before, after a difference of opinion with their owner. "You will find me here," he said, "any time before night."

I stood regarding him; I was like a rabbit fascinated by a snake. I turned away with an effort, but I had not reached the limit of the little quay when I turned again that I might look at him once more. There he sat with his head dropped backward against the towering wall, and a listening look in his face.

"This elevator," he said, "is literally groaning under the pressure of stored grain. The owner is waiting for his price. I shall wait for my price. There is no hurry, no hurry." He had a musing smile, as if he heard sweet drowsy music. Was the man mad? He smiled like a capitalist at whose nod prices rise and fall; he smiled as if he had slept in a bed the night before, and would sleep in the same bed in the night to come, as if his pockets were as full of notes as his mind of fancies. O Rupert! O ghost inexplicable to me then and ever, puzzling as the most intricate heroine of my ill-omened novels, if you care to know that I did not hate you as I ought, let me confess it here. You were impossible; you had deserted your helpless wife and child; I loved them, but I could not hate you. Face to face with my ghost, I found again a strange magnetic attraction in him.

I can see him now, as he leaned back laughing in the shade. The lager beer, or the large hopes in which he had indulged himself, had flushed his cheeks with a new colour. Laughing, he rapped once more the wall of the great elevator, against which he leaned: "Come and listen," he said; "it is groaning with plenty like the festive board of the romancer. Come, sit by me and listen."

I can see his listening face now as I saw it then. His smile was sweet and drowsy; his eyes were half closed. The beer, the quiet spirit of the time, the siren-murmur of the lapping water were lulling him to sleep. "I will come back," I said curtly, and turned my back upon my ghost with stern decision: I would not look back again, but I heard his lazy laughter as I went away.

I shut myself up in solitude that I might think. What could I do with my ghost? I could not force him to return with me to England. Could I persuade him? I dreaded the fatal power of his golden or his silver dreams. What could I hang before his eyes but the picture of a humble home and whole socks? What were these to him in comparison with lager beer and liberty, and the sure hope of a silver mine or a corner in wheat? Should I paint again for him the joys of literature in London? I confess that they seemed tame in comparison with the riches of Aladdin and the life of adventure. Not the dove-like roaring of divers lions in the drawing-room of the Hon. Mrs. Jessup, nor tea at five o'clock with the literary Lady Lopher, could charm my vagrant ghost from the intoxicating possibilities of Milwaukee. Besides, on this literary theme my tongue could only stammer. Conscience made me a coward there. I had been guilty. This is my confession, and I confess my fault once more.

I could think of but one argument for poor Rupert. I would tell him bluntly that not one dollar nor cent should he get from me till he was at home again. I doubted the efficacy of my plan; I feared that Rupert would laugh aloud, and pawn his coat and go on westward to his millions. But I could think of no other argument which was likely to affect him at all, and I set out for the quiet corner where I had left him, forming curt firm sentences which I would fire at him as from a revolver.

I had not gone far when I was startled by a loud explosion as of a

bursting powder-mill. I was nervous, excited, and I jumped at the terrific sound. It was followed by a loud crashing and rending. It seemed to tear me too. I stood still shuddering; and then I was aware of hurrying people. Milwaukee had been frightened from her propriety. There was a crowd around me—men and women all hurrying in one direction, and I was carried along on the full flood. What could it be? Panting, I asked the people next to me; they shook their heads; they knew no more than I. Somewhere by the quiet water something had happened. I knew that I was being borne along to that still corner of the labouring world where my ghost was waiting for me. Suddenly I had turned the last corner, and lo, the very place. The arrested crowd grew thicker every moment; a hoarse murmur came from them; it was a wonder to them, and to me a growing horror. There was the grain elevator, the towering ill-built barn, which I had left an hour ago. There it was, but it had been rent from top to bottom. Great boards and beams had fallen; great boards hung all askew high in the air; it was one ruin. There was no need to ask the cause. The great elevator had burst under the pressure of stored wheat. Cargoes of wheat had slid into the water; a sloping hill of wheat had buried the little quay. I knew what had happened, as if I had seen it happen; and like a flash came back to me the declaration of my ghost that he would go pretty deeply into grain.

They dug his body from under the mountain of corn.

I only want to add a very few words. I have entirely abandoned literature; and the care of a woman and her child has become the occupation of my life. I know that I do not deserve this happiness. The punishment of my fault has turned to peace. If on some day this peace should turn to perfect joy—but of this I must not write, I must not even think, yet.

I am fond of the boy too. He is wonderfully quick in body and in mind; he gives me but one anxiety; I hope that he will not have genius. I do not know what genius is; but sometimes, when I am nervous and alone, I see those scenes—Rupert resplendent on his prancing horse, Rupert declaiming in the Boboli Gardens, Rupert reclining against the fateful elevator. I see those scenes as if I saw them with my actual eyes, and with a groan I pray that Rupert's boy may not develop genius.

I never have these dark hours when she is near me. Indeed, they are less common now and less black. But sometimes still I feel the nervous horror creeping to me, as if I saw again that torn and gutted barn and the great pile of wheat upon the little quay; and sometimes I have looked round me strangely wondering if I should see moving towards me in the shadows my ghost's ghost.

JULIAN STURGIS.